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27 Poems by Han-shan

Translated by Arthur Waley

THE Chinese poet Han-shan lived in the 8th and 9th centuries. He and his brothers worked a farm that they had inherited; but he fell out with them, parted from his wife and family, and wandered from place to place, reading many books and looking in vain for a patron. He finally settled as a recluse on the Cold Mountain (Han-shan) and is always known as "Han-shan." This retreat was about twenty-five miles from T'ien-t'ai, famous for its many monasteries, both Buddhist and Taoist, which Han-shan visited from time to time. In one poem he speaks of himself as being over a hundred. This may be an exaggeration; but it is certain that he lived to a great age.

In his poems the Cold Mountain is often the name of a state of mind rather than of a locality. It is on this conception, as well as on that of the "hidden treasure," the Buddha who is to be sought not somewhere outside us, but "at home" in the heart, that the mysticism of the poems is based.

The poems, of which just over three hundred survive, have no titles.

I

From my father and mother I inherited land enough
And need not envy others' orchards and fields.
Creak, creak goes the sound of my wife's loom;
Back and forth my children prattle at their play.
They clap their hands to make the flowers dance;
Then chin on palm listen to the birds' song.
Does anyone ever come to pay his respects?
Yes, there is a woodcutter who often comes this way.

II

I have thatched my rafters and made a peasant hut;
Horse and carriage seldom come to my gate—
Deep in the woods, where birds love to forgather,
By a broad stream, the home of many fish.
The mountain fruits child in hand I pluck;
My paddy field along with my wife I hoe.
And what have I got inside my house?
Nothing at all but one stand of books.

III

When I was young I weeded book in hand,
Sharing at first a home with my elder brothers.
Something happened, and they put the blame on me;
Even my own wife turned against me.
So I left the red dust of the world and wandered
Hither and thither, reading book after book
And looking for some one who would spare a drop of water
To keep alive the gudgeon in the carriage rut.

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IV

Wretched indeed is the scholar without money;
Who else knows such hunger and cold?
Having nothing to do he takes to writing poems,
He grinds them out till his thoughts refuse to work.
For a starveling's words no one has any use;
Accept the fact and cease your doleful sighs.
Even if you wrote your verses on a macaroon
And gave them to the dog, the dog would refuse to eat.

V

Wise men, you have forsaken me;
Foolish men, I have forsaken you.
Being not foolish and also not wise
Henceforward I shall hear from you no more.
When night falls I sing to the bright moon,
At break of dawn I dance among the white clouds.
Would you have me with closed lips and folded hands
Sit up straight, waiting for my hair to go grey?

VI

I am sometimes asked the way to the Cold Mountain;
There is no path that goes all the way.
Even in summer the ice never melts;
Far into the morning the mists gather thick.
How, you may ask, did *I* manage to get here?
My heart is not like your heart.
If only your heart were like mine
You too would be living where I live now.

VII

Long, long the way to the Cold Mountain;
Stony, stony the banks of the chill stream.
Twitter, twitter—always there are birds;
Lorn and lone—no human but oneself.
Slip, slap the wind blows in one's face;
Flake by flake the snow piles on one's clothes.
Day after day one never sees the sun;
Year after year knows no spring.

VIII

I make my way up the Cold Mountain path;
The way up seems never to end.
The valley so long and the ground so stony;
The stream so broad and the brush so tangled and thick.
The moss is slippery, rain or no rain;
The pine-trees sing even when no wind blows.
Who can bring himself to transcend the bonds of the world
And sit with me among the white clouds?

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IX

Pile on pile, the glories of hill and stream;
Sunset mists enclose flanks of blue.
Brushed by the storm my gauze cap is wet;
The dew damps my straw-plaited coat.
My feet shod with stout pilgrim-shoes,
My hand grasping my old holly staff
Looking again beyond the dusty world
What use have I for a land of empty dreams?

X

I went off quietly to visit a wise monk,
Where misty mountains rose in myriad piles.
The Master himself showed me my way back,
Pointing to where the moon, that round lamp, hung.

XI

In old days, when I was very poor,
Night by night I counted another's treasures.
There came a time when I thought things over
And decided to set up in business on my own.
So I dug at home and came upon a buried treasure;
A ball of saphire—that and nothing less!
There came a crowd of blue-eyed traders from the West
Who had planned together to bid for it and take it away.
But I straightway answered those merchants, saying
"This is a jewel that no price could buy."

XII

Leisurely I wandered to the top of the Flowery Peak;
The day was calm and the morning sun flashed.
I looked into the clear sky on every side.
A white cloud was winging its crane's flight.

XIII

I have for dwelling the shelter of a green cliff;
For garden, a thicket that knife has never trimmed.
Over it the fresh creepers hang their coils;
Ancient rocks stand straight and tall.
The mountain fruits I leave for the monkeys to pick;
The fish of the pool vanish into the heron's beak.
Taoist writings, one volume or two,
Under the trees I read—*nam, nam.*

XIV

The season's change has ended a dismal year;
Spring has come and the colours of things are fresh.
Mountain flowers laugh into the green pools,
The trees on the rock dance in the blue mist.
Bees and butterflies pursue their own pleasure;
Birds and fishes are there for my delight.
Thrilled with feelings of endless comradeship
From dusk to dawn I could not close my eyes.

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XV

A place to prize is this Cold Mountain,
Whose white clouds for ever idle on their own,
Where the cry of monkeys spreads among the paths,
Where the tiger's roar transcends the world of men.
Walking alone I step from stone to stone,
Singing to myself I clutch at the creepers for support.
The wind in the pine-trees makes its shrill note;
The chatter of the birds mingles its harmony.

XVI

The people of the world when they see Han-shan
All regard him as not in his right mind.
His appearance, they say, is far from being attractive,
Tied up as he is in bits of tattered cloth.
"What we say, he cannot understand;
What he says, we do not say."
You who spend all your time in coming and going,
Why not try for once coming to the Han-shan?

XVII

Ever since the time when I hid in the Cold Mountain
I have kept alive by eating the mountain fruits.
From day to day what is there to trouble me?
This my life follows a destined course.
The days and months flow ceaseless as a stream;
Our time is brief as the flash struck on a stone.
If Heaven and Earth shift, then let them shift;
I shall still be sitting happy among the rocks.

XVIII

When the men of the world look for this path amid the clouds
It vanishes, with not a trace where it lay.
The high peaks have many precipices;
On the widest gulleys hardly a gleam falls.
Green walls close behind and before;
White clouds gather east and west.
Do you want to know where the cloud-path lies?
The cloud-path leads from sky to sky.

XIX

Since first I meant to explore the eastern cliff
And have not done so, countless years have passed.
Yesterday I pulled myself up by the creepers,
But half way, was baffled by storm and fog.
The cleft so narrow that my clothing got caught fast;
The moss so sticky that I could not free my shoes.
So I stopped here under this red cinnamon,
To sleep for a while on a pillow of white clouds.

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XX

Sitting alone I am sometimes overcome
By vague feelings of sadness and unrest.
Round the waist of the hill the clouds stretch and stretch;
At the mouth of the valley the winds sough and sigh.
A monkey comes; the trees bend and sway;
A bird goes into the wood with a shrill cry.
Time hastens the grey that wilts on my brow;
The year is over, and age is comfortless.

XXI

Last year when the spring birds were singing
At this time I thought about my brothers.
This year when chrysanthemums are fading
At this time the same thought comes back.
Green waters sob in a thousand streams,
Dark clouds lie flat on every side.
Till life ends, though I live a hundred years,
It will rend my heart to think of Ch'ang-an.

XXII

In the third month when the silkworms were still small
The girls had time to go and gather flowers,
Along the wall they played with the butterflies,
Down by the water they pelted the old frog.
Into gauze sleeves they poured the ripe plums;
With their gold hairpins they dug up bamboo-sprouts.
With all that glitter of outward loveliness
How can the Cold Mountain hope to compete?

XXIII

Last night I dreamt that I was back in my home
And saw my wife weaving at her loom.
She stayed her shuttle as though thinking of something;
When she lifted it again it was as though she had no strength.
I called to her and she turned her head and looked;
She stared blankly, she did not know who I was.
Small wonder, for we parted years ago
When the hair on my temples was still its old colour.

XXIV

I have sat here facing the Cold Mountain
Without budging for twenty-nine years.
Yesterday I went to visit friends and relations;
A good half had gone to the Springs of Death.
Life like a guttering candle wears away—
A stream whose waters forever flow and flow.
Today, with only my shadow for company,
Astonished I find two tear-drops hang.

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XXV

In old days (how long ago it was!)
I remember a house that was lovelier than all the rest.
Peach and plum lined the little paths;
Orchid and iris grew by the stream below.
There walked beside it girls in satins and silks;
Within there glinted a robe of kingfisher-green.
That was how we met; I tried to call her to me,
But my tongue stuck and the words would not come.

XXVI

I sit and gaze on this highest peak of all;
Wherever I look there is distance without end.
I am all alone and no one knows I am here,
A lonely moon is mirrored in the cold pool.
Down in the pool there is not really a moon;
The only moon is in the sky above.
I sing to you this one piece of song;
But in the song there is not any Zen.

XXVII

Should you look for a parable of life and death
Ice and water are the true comparisons.
Water binds and turns into ice;
Ice melts and again becomes water.
Whatever has died will certainly be born,
Whatever has come to life must needs die.
Ice and water do each other no harm;
Life and death too are both good.

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Lionel Trilling

In Mansfield Park

SOONER or later, when we speak of Jane Austen, we speak of her irony, and it is better to speak of it sooner rather than later because nothing can so far mislead us about her work as a wrong understanding of this one aspect of it. Most people either value irony too much or fear it too much. This is true of their response to irony in its first simple meaning, that of a device of rhetoric by which we say one thing and intend its opposite, or intend more, or less, than we say. It is equally true of their response to irony in its derived meaning, the loose generalised sense in which we speak of irony as a quality of someone's mind, Montaigne's for example. Both the excessive valuation and the excessive fear of irony lead us to misconceive the part it can play in the intellectual and moral life. To Jane Austen, irony does not mean, as it means to many, a moral detachment or the tone of superiority that goes with moral detachment. Upon irony so conceived she has made her own judgement in the figure of Mr. Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice*, whose irony of moral detachment is shown to be the cause of his becoming a moral nonentity.

Jane Austen's irony is only secondarily a matter of tone. Primarily it is a method of comprehension. It perceives the world through an awareness of its contradictions, paradoxes, and anomalies. It is by no means detached. It is partisan with generosity of spirit—it is on the side of "life," of "affirmation." But it is preoccupied not only with the charm of the expansive virtues but also with the cost at which they are to be gained and exercised. This cost is regarded as being at once ridiculously high and perfectly fair. What we may call Jane Austen's first or basic irony is the recognition of the fact that spirit is not free, that it is conditioned, that it is limited by circumstance. This, as everyone knows from childhood on, is indeed an anomaly. Her next and consequent irony has reference to the fact that only by reason of this anomaly does spirit have virtue and meaning.

In irony, even in the large derived sense of the word, there is a kind of malice. The ironist has the intention of practising upon the misplaced confidence of the literal mind, of disappointing comfortable expectation. Jane Austen's malice of irony is directed not only upon certain of the characters of her novels but also upon the reader himself. We are quick, too quick, to understand that *Northanger Abbey* invites us into a snug conspiracy to disabuse the little heroine of the errors of her corrupted fancy—Catherine Morland, having become addicted to novels of terror, has accepted their inadmissible premise, she believes that life is violent and unpredictable. And that is exactly what life is shown to be by the events of the story: it is we who must be disabused of our belief that life is sane and orderly. The shock of our surprise at the disappointment of our settled views is of course the more startling because we believe that we have settled our views in conformity with the author's own. Just when we have concluded in *Sense and Sensibility* that we ought to prefer Elinor Dashwood's sense to Marianne Dashwood's sensibility, Elinor herself yearns towards the anarchic

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passionateness of sensibility. In *Emma* the heroine is made to stand at bay to our adverse judgement through virtually the whole novel, but we are never permitted to close in for the kill—some unnamed quality in the girl, some trait of vivacity or will, erects itself into a moral principle, or at least a vital principle, and frustrates our moral blood-lust.

This interference with our moral and intellectual comfort, constitutes, as I say, a malice on the part of the author. And when we respond to Jane Austen with pleasure, we are likely to do so in part because we recognise in her work an analogue with the malice of the experienced universe, with the irony of circumstance, which is always disclosing more than we bargained for.

But there is one novel of Jane Austen's, *Mansfield Park*, in which the characteristic irony seems not to be at work. Indeed, one might say of this novel that it undertakes to discredit irony and to affirm literalness, that it demonstrates that there are no two ways about anything. And *Mansfield Park* is for this reason held by many to be the novel that is least representative of Jane Austen's peculiar attractiveness. For those who admire her it is likely to make an occasion for embarrassment. By the same token, it is the novel which the depreciators of Jane Austen may cite most tellingly in justification of their antagonism.

About this antagonism a word must be said. Few writers have been the object of an admiration so fervent as that which is given to Jane Austen. At the same time, she has been the object of great dislike. Lord David Cecil has said that the people who do not like Jane Austen are the kind of people "who do not like sunshine and unselfishness," and Dr. Chapman, the distinguished editor of Jane Austen's novels and letters, although he dissents from Lord David's opinion, has speculated that perhaps "a certain lack of charity" plays a part in the dislike. But Mark Twain, to take but one example, manifestly did not lack charity or dislike sunshine and unselfishness, and Mark Twain said of Jane Austen that she inspired in him an "animal repugnance." The personal intensity of both parties to the dispute will serve to suggest how momentous, how elemental, is the issue that Jane Austen presents.

The *animality* of Mark Twain's repugnance is probably to be taken as the male's revulsion from a society in which women seem to be at the centre of interest and power, as a man's panic fear at a fictional world in which the masculine principle, although represented as admirable and necessary, is prescribed and controlled by a female mind. Professor Garrod, whose essay, "Jane Austen, A Depreciation," is a *summa* of all the reasons for disliking Jane Austen, expresses a repugnance which is very nearly as feral as Mark Twain's; he implies that a direct sexual insult is being offered to men by a woman author who "describes everything in the youth of women which does not matter" in such a way as to appeal to "that age in men when they have begun to ask themselves whether anything matters." The sexual protest is not only masculine—Charlotte Brontë despised Jane Austen for representing men and women as nothing but ladies and gentlemen.

The sexual objection to Jane Austen is a very common one, even when it is not made explicit. It is not valid, but it must be taken into serious account. But then there is Emerson with his characteristic sexual indifference, his striking lack of animality, and Emerson's objection to Jane Austen is quick and entire, is instinctual. He says that she is "sterile" and goes on to call her "vulgar." Emerson held this opinion out of his passion of concern for the liberty of the self and the autonomy of spirit, and his holding it must make us see that the sexual reason for disliking Jane Austen must be subsumed under another reason which is larger, and, actually, even more elemental: the fear of imposed constraint. Dr. Chapman says something of this sort when he speaks of "political prejudice" and "impatient idealism" as perhaps having something to do with the dislike of Jane Austen. But these phrases, apart from the fact that they prejudge the case, do not suggest the biological force of the resistance which certain temperaments offer to the idea of society as a limiting condition of the individual spirit.

Such temperaments are not likely to take Jane Austen's irony as a melioration of her

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particular idea of society. On the contrary, they are likely to suppose that irony is but the engaging manner by which she masks society's crude coercive power. And they can point to *Mansfield Park* to show what the social coercion is in all its literal truth, before irony has beglamoured us about it and induced us to be comfortable with it—here it is in all its negation, in all the force of its repressiveness. Perhaps no other work of genius has ever spoken, or seemed to speak, so insistently for cautiousness and constraint, even for dullness. No other great novel has so anxiously asserted the need to find security, to establish, in fixity and enclosure, a refuge from the dangers of openness and chance.

There is scarcely one of our modern pieties that it does not offend. Despite our natural tendency to permit costume and manners to separate her world from ours, most readers have no great difficulty in realising that all the other novels of Jane Austen are, in essential ways, of our modern time. This is the opinion of the many students with whom I have read the novels; not only do the young men controvert by their enthusiasm the judgement of Professor Garrod that Jane Austen appeals only to men of middle age, but they easily and naturally assume her to have a great deal to say to them about the modern personality. But *Mansfield Park* is the exception, and it is bitterly resented. It scandalises the modern assumptions about social relations, about virtue, about religion, sex, and art. Most troubling of all is its preference for rest over motion. To deal with the world by condemning it, by withdrawing from it and shutting it out, by making oneself and one's mode and principle of life the very centre of existence and to live the round of one's days in the stasis and peace thus contrived—this, in an earlier age, was one of the recognised strategies of life, but to us it seems not merely impracticable but almost wicked.

Yet *Mansfield Park* is a great novel, its greatness being commensurate with its power to offend.

MANSFIELD PARK was published in 1814, only one year after the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*, and no small part of its interest derives from the fact that it seems to controvert everything that its predecessor tells us about life. One of the striking things about *Pride and Prejudice* is that it achieves a quality of transcendence through comedy. The comic mode typically insists upon the fact of human limitation, even of human littleness, but *Pride and Prejudice* makes comedy reverse itself and yield the implication of a divine enlargement. The novel celebrates the traits of spiritedness, vivacity, celerity, and lightness, and associates them with happiness and virtue. Its social doctrine is a generous one, asserting the right of at least the *good* individual to define himself according to his own essence. It is animated by an impulse to forgiveness. One understands very easily why many readers are moved to explain their pleasure in the book by reference to Mozart, especially *The Marriage of Figaro*.

Almost the opposite can be said of *Mansfield Park*. Its impulse is not to forgive but to condemn. Its praise is not for social freedom but for social stasis. It takes full notice of spiritedness, vivacity, celerity, and lightness, but only to reject them as having nothing to do with virtue and happiness, as being, indeed, deterrents to the good life.

Nobody, I believe, has ever found it possible to like the heroine of *Mansfield Park*. Fanny Price is overtly virtuous and consciously virtuous. Our modern literary feeling is very strong against people who, when they mean to be virtuous, believe they know how to reach their goal and do reach it. We think that virtue is not interesting, even that it is not really virtue, unless it manifests itself as a product of "grace" operating through a strong inclination to sin. Our favourite saint is likely to be Augustine; he is sweetened for us by his early transgressions. We cannot understand how any age could have been interested in Patient Griselda. We admire Milton only if we believe with Blake that he was of the Devil's party, of which we are fellow-travellers; the paradox of the *felix culpa* and the "fortunate fall" appeals to us for other than theological reasons and serves to validate all sins and all falls, which we take to be the signs of life.

It does not reconcile us to the virtue of Fanny

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Price that it is rewarded by more than itself. The shade of Pamela hovers over her career. We take failure to be the mark of true virtue and we do not like it that, by reason of her virtue, the terrified little stranger in Mansfield Park grows up to be virtually its mistress.

Even more alienating is the state of the heroine's health. Fanny is in a debilitated condition through the greater part of the novel. At a certain point the author retrieves this situation and sees to it that Fanny becomes taller, prettier, and more energetic. But the first impression remains of a heroine who cannot cut a basket of roses without fatigue and headache.

Fanny's debility becomes the more striking when we consider that no quality of the heroine of *Pride and Prejudice* is more appealing than her physical energy. We think of Elizabeth Bennet as in physical movement; her love of dancing confirms our belief that she moves gracefully. It is characteristic of her to smile; she likes to tease; she loves to talk. She is remarkably responsive to all attractive men. And to outward seeming, Mary Crawford of *Mansfield Park* is another version of Elizabeth Bennet, and Mary Crawford is the antithesis of Fanny Price. The boldness with which the antithesis is contrived is typical of the uncompromising honesty of *Mansfield Park*. Mary Crawford is conceived—is calculated—to win the charmed admiration of almost any reader. She is all pungency and wit. Her mind is as lively and competent as her body; she can bring not only a horse but a conversation to the gallop. She is downright, open, intelligent, impatient. Irony is her natural mode, and we are drawn to think of her voice as being as nearly the author's own as Elizabeth Bennet's is. Yet in the end we are asked to believe that she is not to be admired, that her lively mind compounds, by very reason of its liveliness, with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

This strange, this almost perverse, rejection of Mary Crawford's vitality in favour of Fanny's debility lies at the very heart of the novel's intention. "The divine," said T. E. Hulme in *Speculations*, "is not life at its intensest. It contains in a way an almost anti-vital element." Perhaps it cannot quite be said that "the divine" is the object of Fanny's soul, yet she is a Christian heroine. Hulme expresses with an air of discovery what was once taken for granted in Christian feeling. Fanny is one of the poor in spirit. It is not a condition of the soul to which we are nowadays sympathetic. We are likely to suppose that it masks hostility —many modern readers respond to Fanny by suspecting her. This is perhaps not unjustified, but as we try to understand what Jane Austen meant by the creation of such a heroine, we must have in mind the tradition which affirmed the peculiar sanctity of the sick, the weak, and the dying. The tradition perhaps came to an end for literature with the death of Milly Theale, the heroine of Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove*, but Dickens exemplifies its continuing appeal in the 19th century, and it was especially strong in the 18th century. Clarissa's sickness and death confirm her Christian virtue, and in Fielding's *Amelia*, the novel which may be said to bear the same relation to *Tom Jones* that *Mansfield Park* bears to *Pride and Prejudice*, the sign of the heroine's Christian authority is her loss of health and beauty.

Fanny is a Christian heroine: it is therefore not inappropriate that the issue between her and Mary Crawford should be concentrated in the debate over whether or not Edmund Bertram shall become a clergyman. We are not, however, from our reading of the novel, inclined to say more than that the debate is "not inappropriate"—it startles us to discover that ordination was what Jane Austen said her novel was to be "about." In the letter in which she tells of having received the first copies of *Pride and Prejudice*, and while she is still in high spirits over her achievement, she says, "Now I will try and write something else, and it shall be a complete change of subject—ordination." A novelist, of course, presents a new subject to himself, or to his friends, in all sorts of ways that are inadequate to his real intention as it eventually will disclose itself—the most unsympathetic reader of *Mansfield Park* would scarcely describe it as being about ordination. Yet the question of ordination is of essential importance to the novel.

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It is not really a religious question, but, rather, a cultural question, having to do with the meaning and effect of a *profession*. Two senses of that word are in point here, the open avowal of principles and beliefs as well as a man's commitment to a particular kind of life-work. It is the latter sense that engages us first. The argument between Fanny and Mary is over what will happen to Edmund as a person, as a *man*, if he chooses to become a clergyman. To Mary, every clergyman is the Mr. Collins of *Pride and Prejudice*; she thinks of ordination as a surrender of manhood. But Fanny sees the Church as a career that claims a man's best manly energies; her expressed view of the churchman's function is that which was to develop through the century, exemplified in, say, Thomas Arnold, who found the Church to be an adequate field for what he called his talents for command.

The matter of a man's profession was of peculiar importance to Jane Austen. It weighs heavily against Mr. Bennet that, his estate being entailed, he has made no effort to secure his family against his death, and by reason of his otiosity he is impotent to protect his family's good name from the consequences of Lydia's sexual escapade. He is represented as being not only less a man but also as less a gentleman than his brother-in-law Gardiner, who is in trade in London. Jane Austen's feelings about men in relation to their profession reach their highest intensity in *Persuasion*, in the great comic scene in which Sir Walter Elliot is flattered by Mrs. Clay's telling him that every profession puts its mark upon a man's face, and that a true gentleman will avoid this vulgar injury to his complexion. And in the same novel much is made of the professional pride of the Navy and the good effect it has upon the personal character.

In 19th century England the ideal of professional commitment inherits a large part of the moral prestige of the ideal of the gentleman. Such figures as the engineer Daniel Doyce of *Little Dorrit* or Dr. Lydgate of *Middlemarch* represent the developing belief that a man's moral life is bound up with his loyalty to the discipline of his calling. The concern with the profession was an aspect of the ethical concept which was prepotent in the spiritual life of England in the 19th century, the concept of duty. The Church, in its dominant form and characteristic virtue, was here quite at one with the tendency of secular feeling; its preoccupation may be said to have been less with the achievement of salvation than with the performance of duty.

The word grates upon our moral ear. We do what we should do, but we shrink from giving it the name of duty. "Cooperation," "social mindedness," the "sense of the group," "class solidarity"—these locutions do not mean what duty means. They have been invented precisely for the purpose of describing right conduct in such a way as *not* to imply what duty implies—a self whose impulses and desires are very strong, and a willingness to subordinate these impulses and desires to the claim of some external non-personal good. The new locutions are meant to suggest that right action is typically to be performed without any pain to the self.

The men of the 19th century did not imagine this possibility. They thought that morality was terribly hard to achieve, at the cost of renunciation and sacrifice. We of our time often wonder what could have made the difficulty. We wonder, for example, why a man like Matthew Arnold felt it necessary to remind himself daily of duty, why he believed that the impulses must be "bridled" and "chained down," why he insisted on the "strain and labour and suffering" of the moral life. We are as much puzzled as touched by the tone in which F. W. H. Myers, tells of walking with George Eliot in the Fellows' Garden at Trinity "on an evening of rainy May," and she, speaking of God, Immortality, and Duty, said how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, "yet how peremptory and absolute the third." "Never, perhaps, have sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and unrecompensing Law. I listened, and night fell; her grave majestic countenance turned towards me like a sybil's in the gloom; it was as though she withdrew from my grasp, one by one, the two scrolls of promise, and left me the third scroll only, awful with inevitable fate."

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THE diminution of faith in the promise of religion accounts for much but not for all the concern with duty in 19th century England. It was not a crisis of religion that made Wordsworth the laureate of duty. What Wordsworth asks in his great poem, "Resolution and Independence," is how the self, in its highest manifestation, in the Poet, can preserve itself from its own nature, from the very sensibility and volatility that define it, from its own potentiality of what Wordsworth calls with superb explicitness "despondency and madness." Something has attenuated the faith in the self of four years before, of "Tintern Abbey," the certitude that "Nature never did betray/The heart that loved her": a new Paraclete is needed and he comes in the shape of the Old Leech Gatherer, a man rock-like in endurance, rock-like in insensibility, annealed by a simple, rigorous religion, preserved in life and in virtue by the "anti-vital element" and transfigured by that element.

That the self may destroy the self by the very energies that define its being, that the self may be preserved by the negation of its own energies—this, whether or not we agree, makes a paradox, makes an irony, that catches our imagination. Much of the 19th century preoccupation with duty was not a love of Law for its own sake, but rather a concern with the hygiene of the self. If we are aware of this, we are prepared to take seriously an incident in *Mansfield Park* that on its face is perfectly absurd.

The great fuss that is made over the amateur theatricals can seem to us a mere travesty on virtue. And the more so because it is never made clear why it is so very wrong for young people in a dull country house to put on a play. The mystery deepens, as does our sense that *Mansfield Park* represents an unusual state of the author's mind, when we know that amateur theatricals were a favourite amusement in Jane Austen's home. The play is Kotzebue's *Lovers' Vows* and it deals with illicit love and a bastard, but Jane Austen, as her letters and novels clearly show, was not a prude. Some of the scenes of the play permit Maria Bertram and Henry Crawford to make love in public, but this is not said to be decisively objectionable. What is decisive is a traditional, almost primitive, feeling about dramatic impersonation. We know of this, of course, from Plato, and it is one of the points on which almost everyone feels superior to Plato, but it may have more basis in actuality than we commonly allow. It is the fear that the impersonation of a bad or inferior character will have a harmful effect upon the impersonator, that, indeed, the impersonation of any other self will diminish the integrity of the real self.

A right understanding of the seemingly absurd episode of the play must dispel any doubt of the largeness of the cultural significance of *Mansfield Park*. The American philosopher George Mead has observed that the "assumption of roles" was one of the most important elements of romanticism. Mead conceived of impersonation as a new mode of thought appropriate to that new sense of the self which was romanticism's characteristic achievement. It was, he said further, the self's method of defining itself. Involved as we all are in this mode of thought and in this method of self-definition, we are not likely to respond sympathetically to Jane Austen when she puts it under attack as being dangerous to the integrity of the self as a moral agent. Yet the testimony of John Keats stands in her support—in one of his most notable letters Keats says of the poet that, as poet, he cannot be a moral agent; he has no "character," no "self," no "identity"; he is concerned not with moral judgement but with "gusto," subordinating his own being to that of the objects of his creative regard. Wordsworth implies something of a related sort when he contrasts the poet's volatility of mood with the bulking permanence of identity of the Old Leech Gatherer. And of course not only the poet but the reader may be said to be involved in the problems of identity and of (in the literal sense) integrity. Literature offers the experience of the diversification of the self, and Jane Austen puts the question of literature at the moral centre of her novel.

THE massive ado that is organised about the amateur theatricals and the dangers of impersonation thus has a direct bearing upon the matter of Edmund Bertram's profession.

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The election of a profession is of course in a way the assumption of a role, but it is a permanent impersonation which makes virtually impossible the choice of another. It is a commitment which fixes the nature of the self.

The ado about the play extends its significance still further. It points, as it were, to a great and curious triumph of Jane Austen's art. The triumph consists in this—that although on a first reading of *Mansfield Park* Mary Crawford's speeches are all delightful, they diminish in charm as we read the novel a second time. We begin to hear something disagreeable in their intonation: it is the peculiarly modern bad quality which Jane Austen was the first to represent—insincerity. This is a trait very different from the *hypocrisy* of the earlier novelists. Mary Crawford's intention is not to deceive the world but to comfort herself; she impersonates the woman she thinks she ought to be. And as we become inured to the charm of her performance we see through the moral impersonation and are troubled that it should have been thought necessary. In Mary Crawford we have the first brilliant example of a distinctively modern type, the person who cultivates the *style* of sensitivity, virtue, and intelligence.

Henry Crawford has more sincerity than his sister, and the adverse judgement which the novel makes on him is therefore arrived at with greater difficulty. He is conscious of his charm, of the winningness of his personal style, which has in it—as he knows—a large element of *natural* goodness and generosity. He is no less conscious of his lack of weight and solidity; his intense courtship of Fanny is, we may say, his effort to add the gravity of principle to his merely natural goodness. He becomes, however, the prey to his own charm, and in his cold flirtation with Maria Bertram he is trapped by his impersonation of passion—his role requires that he carry Maria off from a dull marriage to a life of boring concupiscence. It is his sister's refusal to attach any moral importance to this event that is the final proof of her deficiency in seriousness. Our modern impulse to resist the condemnation of sexuality and of sexual liberty cannot properly come into play here, as at first we think it should. For it is not sexuality that is being condemned, but precisely that form of a-sexuality that incurred D. H. Lawrence's greatest scorn—that is, sexuality as a game, or as a drama, sexuality as an expression of mere will or mere personality, as a sign of power, or prestige, or autonomy: as, in short, an impersonation and an insincerity.

A passage in one of her letters of 1814, written while *Mansfield Park* was in composition, enforces upon us how personally Jane Austen was involved in the question of principle as against personality, of character as against style. A young man has been paying court to her niece, Fanny Knight, and the girl is troubled by, exactly, the effect of his principledness on his style. Her aunt's comment is especially interesting because it contains an avowal of sympathy with Evangelicism, an opinion which is the reverse of that which she had expressed in a letter of 1809 and had represented in *Pride and Prejudice*, yet the religious opinion is but incidental to the affirmation that is being made of the moral advantage of the profession of principle, whatever may be its effect on the personal style.

> Mr. J. P.—has advantages which do not often meet in one person. His only fault indeed seems Modesty. If he were less modest, he would be more agreeable, speak louder & look Impudenter;—and is it not a fine Character of which Modesty is the only defect? —I have no doubt that he will get more lively & more like yourselves as he is more with you;—he will catch your ways if he belongs to you. And as to there being any objection from his *Goodness*, from the danger of his becoming even Evangelical, I cannot admit *that*. I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be Evangelicals, & am at least persuaded that they who are so from Reason and Feeling, must be happiest & safest. Do not be frightened from the connection by your Brothers having most wit. Wisdom is better than Wit, & in the long run will certainly have the laugh on her side; & don't be frightened by the idea of his acting more strictly up to the precepts of the New Testament than others.

THE great charm, the charming greatness, of *Pride and Prejudice* is that it permits us to conceive of morality as style. The relation of Elizabeth Bennet to Darcy is real, is intense, but it expresses itself as a conflict and reconciliation of styles: a formal rhetoric, traditional and rigorous, must find a way to accommodate a

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female vivacity, which in turn must recognise the principled demands of the strict male syntax. The high moral import of the novel lies in the fact that the union of styles is accomplished without injury to either lover.

Jane Austen knew that *Pride and Prejudice* was a unique success and she triumphed in it. Yet as she listens to her mother reading aloud from the printed book, she becomes conscious of her dissatisfaction with one element of the work. It is the element that is likely to delight us most, the purity and absoluteness of its particular style.

> The work [she writes in a letter to her sister Cassandra] is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling; it wants to be stretched out here and there with a long chapter of sense, if it could be had; if not, of solemn specious nonsense, about something unconnected with the story; an essay on writing, a critique on Walter Scott, or the history of Buonaparté, or anything that would form a contrast, and bring the reader with increased delight to the playfulness and epigrammatism of the general style.

Her overt concern, of course, is for the increase of the effect of the "general style" itself, which she believes would have been heightened by contrast. But she has in mind something beyond this technical improvement—her sense that the novel is a genre that must not try for the shining outward perfection of style, that it must maintain a degree of roughness of texture, a certain hard literalness, that, for the sake of its moral life, it must violate its own beauty by incorporating some of the irreducible prosy actuality of the world. It is as if she were saying of *Pride and Prejudice* what Henry James says of one of the characters of his story, "Crapy Cornelia": "Her grace of ease was perfect, but it was all grace of ease, not a single shred of it grace of uncertainty or of difficulty."

Mansfield Park, we may conceive, was the effort to encompass the grace of uncertainty and difficulty. The idea of morality as achieved style, as grace of ease, is not likely ever to be relinquished, not merely because some writers will always assert it anew, but also because morality itself will always insist on it—at a certain point in its development, morality seeks to express its independence of the grinding necessity by which it is engendered, and to claim for itself the autonomy and gratuitousness of art. Yet the idea is one that may easily deteriorate or be perverted. Style, which expresses the innermost truth of any creation or action, can also hide the truth; it is in this sense of the word that we speak of "mere style." *Mansfield Park* proposes to us the possibility of this deception. If we perceive this, we cannot say that the novel is without irony—we must say, indeed, that its irony is more profound than that of any of Jane Austen's novels.

IN THE investigation of the question of character as against personality, of principle as against style, and grace of ease as against grace of difficulty, it is an important consideration that the Crawfords are of London. Their manner is the London manner, their style is the *chic* of the metropolis. The city bears the brunt of our modern uneasiness about our life. We think of it as being the scene and the cause of the loss of the simple integrity of the spirit—in our dreams of our right true selves we live in the country. This common mode of criticism of our culture is likely to express not merely our dissatisfaction with our particular cultural situation but our dislike of culture itself, or of any culture that is not a folk culture, that is marked by the conflict of interests and the proliferation and conflict of ideas. Yet the revulsion from the metropolis cannot be regarded merely with scepticism; it plays too large and serious a part in our literature to be thought of as nothing but a sentimentality.

To the style of London, Sir Thomas Bertram is the principled antagonist. The real reason for not giving the play, as everyone knows, is that Sir Thomas would not permit it were he at home; everyone knows that a sin is being committed against the absent father. And Sir Thomas, when he returns before his expected time, confirms their consciousness of sin. It is he who identifies the objection to the theatricals as being specifically that of impersonation. His own self is an integer and he instinctively resists the diversification of the self that is implied by the assumption of roles. It is he, in his entire identification with his status and tradition, who makes of Mansfield Park the citadel it is—it exists to front life and to repel life's mutabilities, like the Peele Castle of Wordsworth's "Elegiac

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Verses," of which it is said that it is "cased in the unfeeling armour of old time." In this phrase Wordsworth figures in a very precise way the Stoic doctrine of *apatheia*, the principled refusal to experience more emotion than is forced upon one, the rejection of sensibility as a danger to the integrity of the self.

Mansfield stands not only against London but also against what is implied by Portsmouth on Fanny's visit to her family there. Fanny's mother, Lady Bertram's sister, had made an unprosperous marriage, and the Bertrams' minimal effort to assist her with the burdens of a large family had been the occasion of Fanny's coming to live at Mansfield nine years before. Her return to take her place in a home not of actual poverty but of respectable sordidness makes one of the most engaging episodes of the novel, despite our impulse to feel that it ought to seem the most objectionable. We think we ought not be sympathetic with Fanny as, to her slow dismay, she understands that she cannot be happy with her own, her natural, family. She is made miserable by the lack of cleanliness and quiet, of civility and order. We jib at this, we remind ourselves that for the seemliness that does indeed sustain the soul, men too often sell their souls, that warmth and simplicity of feeling may go with indifference to disorder. But if we have the most elementary honesty, we feel with Fanny the genuine pain not merely of the half-clean and the scarcely tidy, of confusion and intrusion, but also of the vulgarity that thrives in these surroundings. It is beyond human ingenuity to define what we mean by vulgarity, but in Jane Austen's novels vulgarity has these elements: smallness of mind, insufficiency of awareness, assertive self-esteem, the wish to devalue, especially to devalue the human worth of other people. That Fanny's family should have forgotten her during her long absence was perhaps inevitable; it is a vulgarity that they have no curiosity about her and no desire to revive the connection, and this indifference is represented as being of a piece with the general indecorum of their lives. We do not blame Fanny when she remembers that in her foster-father's house there are many rooms, that hers, although for years it had been small and cold, had always been clean and private, that now, although she had once been snubbed and slighted at Mansfield, she is the daughter of Sir Thomas's stern heart.

Of all the fathers of Jane Austen's novels, Sir Thomas is the only one to whom admiration is given. Fanny's real father, Lieutenant Price of the Marines, is shallow and vulgar. The fathers of the heroines of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*, all lack principle and fortitude; they are corrupted by their belief in their delicate vulnerability—they lack *apatheia*. Yet Sir Thomas is a father, and a father is as little safe from Jane Austen's judgement as he is from Shelley's. Jane Austen's masculine ideal is exemplified by husbands, by Darcy, Knightley, and Wentworth, in whom principle and duty consort with a ready and tender understanding. Sir Thomas's faults are dealt with explicitly—if he learns to cherish Fanny as the daughter of his heart, he betrays the daughters of his blood. Maria's sin and her sister Julia's bad disposition are blamed directly upon his lack of intelligence and sensibility. His principled submission to convention had issued in mere worldliness—he had not seen to it that "principle, active principle" should have its place in the rearing of his daughters, had not given them that "sense of duty which alone can suffice" to govern inclination and temper. He knew of no other way to counteract the low worldly flattery of their Aunt Norris than by the show of that sternness which had alienated them from him. He has allowed Mrs. Norris, the corrupter of his daughters and the persecutor of Fanny, to establish herself in the governance of his home; "she seemed part of himself."

So that Mansfield is governed by an authority all too fallible. Yet Fanny thinks of all that comes "within the view and patronage of Mansfield Park" as "dear to her heart and thoroughly perfect in her eyes." The judgement is not ironical. For the author as well as for the heroine, Mansfield Park is the good place—it is The Great Good Place. It is the house "where all's accustomed, ceremonious," of Yeats's "Prayer For His Daughter"—

> *How but in custom and ceremony*
> *Are innocence and beauty born?*

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Yet Fanny's loving praise of Mansfield, which makes the novel's last word, does glance at ironies and encompasses ironies. Of these the chief is that Lady Bertram is part of the perfection. All of Mansfield's life makes reference and obeisance to Sir Thomas's wife, who is gentle and without spite, but mindless and moveless, concerned with nothing but the indulgence of her mild, inexorable wants. Middle-aged, stupid, maternal persons are favourite butts for Jane Austen, but although Lady Bertram is teased, she is loved. Sir Thomas's authority must be qualified and tutored by the principled intelligence, the religious intelligence—Fanny's, in effect—but Lady Bertram is permitted to live unregenerate her life of cushioned ease.

I am never quite able to resist the notion that, in her attitude to Lady Bertram, Jane Austen is teasing herself, that she is turning her irony upon her own fantasy of ideal existence as it presented itself to her at this time. It is scarcely possible to observe how *Mansfield Park* differs from her work that had gone before and from her work that was to come after without supposing that the difference points to a crisis in the author's spiritual life. In that crisis fatigue plays a great part—we are drawn to believe that for the moment she wants to withdraw from the exigent energies of her actual self, that she claims in fancy the right to be rich and fat and smooth and dull like Lady Bertram, to sit on a cushion, to be a creature of habit and an object of ritual deference, not to be conscious, especially not to be conscious of herself. Lady Bertram is, we may imagine, her mocking representation of her wish to escape from the requirements of personality.

It was Jane Austen who first represented the specifically modern personality and the culture in which it had its being. Never before had the moral life been shown as she shows it to be, never before had it been conceived to be so complex and difficult and exhausting. Hegel speaks of the "secularisation of spirituality" as a prime characteristic of the modern epoch, and Jane Austen is the first to tell us what this involves. She is the first novelist to represent society, the general culture, as playing a part in the normal life, generating the concepts of "sincerity" and "vulgarity" which no earlier time would have understood the meaning of, and which for us are so subtle that they defy definition, and so powerful that none can escape their sovereignty. She is the first to be aware of the Terror which rules our moral situation, the ubiquitous anonymous judgement to which we respond, the necessity we feel to demonstrate the purity of our secular spirituality, whose dark and dubious places are more numerous and obscure than those of religious spirituality, to put our lives and styles to the question, making sure that not only in deeds but in *décor* they exhibit the signs of our belonging to the number of the secular-spiritual elect.

She herself is an agent of the Terror—we learn from her what our lives should be and by what subtle and fierce criteria they will be judged, and how to pass upon the lives of our friends and fellows. Once we have comprehended her mode of judgement, the moral and spiritual lessons of contemporary literature are easy—the metaphysics of "sincerity" and "vulgarity" once mastered, the modern teachers, Lawrence and Joyce, Yeats and Eliot, Proust and Gide, have but little to add save in the way of abstruse contemporary examples.

To what extremes the Terror can go she herself has made all too clear in the notorious passage in *Persuasion* in which she comments on Mrs. Musgrove's "large, fat sighings" over her dead scapegrace son. "Personal size and mental sorrow have certainly no necessary proportions," she says. "A large bulky figure has as good a right to be in deep affliction as the most graceful set of limbs in the world. But fair or not fair, there are unbecoming conjunctions, which reason will patronise in vain—which taste cannot tolerate, which ridicule will seize." We feel this to be unconscionable, and Henry James and E. M. Forster will find occasion to warn us that it is one of the signs of the death of the heart to regard a human being as an object of greater or less *vertu*; in fairness to Jane Austen we must remember that the passage occurs in the very novel which deals mercilessly with Sir Walter Elliot for making just this illegitimate application of taste to life. But although this æsthetic-spiritual snobbery is for Jane Austen a

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unique lapse, it is an extension, an extravagance, of her characteristic mode of judgement, and it leads us to see what is implied by the "secularisation of spirituality," which requires of us that we judge not merely the moral act itself but also, and even more searchingly, the quality of the agent. This is what Hegel has in mind when he is at such pains to make his distinction between character and personality and to show how the development of the idea of personality is one of the elements of the secularisation of spirituality. John Dewey followed Hegel in this when, in his *Ethics*, he said that moral choice is not really dictated by the principle or the maxim that is applicable to the situation but rather by the "kind of self-hood" one wishes to "assume." And Nietzsche's conception of the Third Morality, which takes cognisance of the *real*—that is, the unconscious—intention of the agent, is the terrible instrument of criticism of this new development of the moral life. We are likely to feel that this placing of the personality, of the quality of being, at the centre of the moral life is a chief glory of spirit in its modern manifestation, and when we take pleasure in Jane Austen we are responding to her primacy and brilliance in the exercise of this new mode of judgement. Yet we at times become aware of the terrible strain it imposes upon us, of the exhausting effort that the concept of personality requires us to make, and of the pain of exacerbated sensitivity to others, leading to the *disgust* which is endemic in our culture.

Jane Austen's primacy in representing this great and decisive mutation in the life of the spirit constitutes a large part of her claim to greatness. But in her representation of the modern situation *Mansfield Park* has a special place. It imagines the self safe from the Terror of secularised spirituality. In the person of Lady Bertram it affirms, with all due irony, the bliss of being able to remain unconscious of the demands of personality (it is a bliss which is a kind of virtue, for one way of being solid, simple, and sincere is to be a vegetable). It shuts out the world and the judgement of the world. The sanctions upon which it relies are not those of culture, of quality of being, of personality, but precisely those which the new conception of the moral life minimised, the sanctions of principle, and it discovers in principle the path to the wholeness of the self which is peace. When we have exhausted our anger at the offence which *Mansfield Park* offers to our conscious pieties, we find it possible to perceive how intimately it speaks to our secret, inexpressible hopes.

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George Bernard Shaw

The Cleveland Street Scandals

[*Editors' Note: On August 20th, 1889, a Mr. George Daniel Veck, a man who either was or pretended to be a minister, was arrested as an accomplice in the operation of a house of male prostitution at 19 Cleveland St., London. Several members of the aristocracy were involved as being clients of the house; in addition, it was charged that many of the boys concerned were shipped out of the country so that their testimony would not be given. The trial of Veck was swift and silent. According to a contemporary source, "They were almost surreptitiously put into the dock of the Old Bailey, hardly anyone in the court, pleaded guilty and sentenced to one month by the Recorder."*

George Bernard Shaw's letter about the Cleveland St. scandals was intended for Truth *magazine, but it was either never sent or was suppressed by the editor. The manuscript is now in the possession of Dr. J. Schwarz; and Mr. St. John Ervine, who has seen a photostat, agrees that there can hardly be any question of its authenticity.*

We are pleased to publish this letter for the first time. It antedates by nine years what was previously accepted as Shaw's first printed letter and, despite the passing of the years, it is not without its topical interest.]

SIR—I am sorry to have to ask you to allow me to mention what everybody declares unmentionable; but as a majority of the population habitually flavor their conversation with it to the extent of mentioning it at every sixth word or so, I shall not make matters much worse by a serious utterance on the subject. My justification shall be that we may presently be saddled with the moral responsibility for monstrously severe punishments inflicted not only on persons who have corrupted children, but on others whose conduct, however nasty and ridiculous, has been perfectly within their admitted rights as individuals.

To a fully occupied person in normal health, with due opportunities for healthy social enjoyment, the mere idea of the subject of the threatened prosecutions is so expressively disagreeable as to appear unnatural. But everybody does not find it so. There are among us highly respected citizens who have been expelled from public schools for giving effect to the contrary opinion; and there are hundreds of others who might have been expelled on the same ground had they been found out. Greek philosophers, otherwise of unquestioned virtue, have differed with us on the point. So have soldiers, sailors, convicts, and in fact members of all communities deprived of intercourse with women. A whole series of Balzac's novels turns upon attachments formed by galley slaves for one another—attachments which are represented as redeeming them from utter savagery. Women, from Sappho downwards, have shewn that this abnormal appetite is not confined to one sex. Now I do not believe myself to be the only man in England acquainted with these facts. And I strongly protest against any journalist writing, as nine out of ten are at this moment dipping their pens to write, as if he had never heard of such things except as vague and sinister rumours concerning the most corrupt phases in the decadence of Babylon, Greece and Rome. All men of the world know that they are constantly carried on by a small minority of people, just as morphine injecting or opium smoking are constantly carried on; and that

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wherever the passions are denied their natural satisfaction (as on Norfolk Island,* for instance) the alternative will become correspondingly general unless it is prevented by stringent surveillance.

I appeal now to the champions of individual rights—to Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mr. Auberon Herbert, Lord Bramwell, Mr. Leonard Courtney, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Bradlaugh and the rest—to join me in a protest against a law by which two adult men can be sentenced to twenty years penal servitude for a private act, freely consented to and desired by both, which concerns themselves alone. There is absolutely no justification for the law except the old theological one of making the secular arm the instrument of God's vengeance. It is a survival from that discarded system with its stonings and burnings; and it survives because it is so unpleasant that men are loth to meddle with it even with the object of getting rid of it, lest they should be suspected of acting in their personal interest. If the conduct which its abolition would remove from the category of crime is indeed intolerably repellent to society, persons addicted to it can be boycotted—"hounded out," as the phrase goes. But it is worth mentioning that society, instead of acting up in any such way to its overcharged protestations of horrors, only laughs contemptuously. You, Mr. Editor, or I, or any man who knows London life, could without a moment's hesitation, point out at least one gentleman and one lady as to whose character in this respect there is no more doubt than there is as to that of the latest absconder against whom a warrant is out; but we do not find that their social acceptance is much, if at all, less than that of their untainted peers.

* From 1788 to 1855, Norfolk Island was a penal colony.

We are now free to face with the evil of our relic of Inquisition law, and of the moral cowardice which prevents our getting rid of it. When the corruption of children (which is quite on a different footing, and is a legitimate subject for resolute repression) made it necessary the other day to expose a den of debauchees, the Press was paralyzed with superstitious terror; and not a word was said until you, fortified by your parliamentary position, let the cat out of the bag. My friend Mr. Parke, promptly following it up is menaced with proceedings which would never have been dreamt of had he advanced charges—socially much more serious—of polluting rivers with factory refuse, or paying women wages that needed to be eked out to subsistence point by prostitution. One result of this is that the scandals can no longer be ignored by the general Press. The only question now is, shall they be discussed with sane straightforwardness and without affectation; or are they to be darkly hinted at and gloated over as filthy, unmentionable, abominable, and every other adjective and innuendo that can make them prurient and mischievous? If the latter, the discussion will do more harm than all the practices, from the subterfuge of Onan to the peculiar continence of Oneida Creek, which might be persecuted as "abominations" with as much reason as the *poses plastiques* of Cleveland St. For my own part, always reserving the right of the children to careful protection against debauchees, I protest against the principle of the law under which the warrants have been issued; and I hope that no attempt will be made to enforce its outrageous penalties in the case of adult men.

Yrs, etc.

G. Bernard Shaw

29 Fitzroy Square, W.
26th November, 1889

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Richard Wright

"What is Africa to Me?"

Some impressions of a visit to the Gold Coast

What is Africa to me:
Copper sun or scarlet sea,
Jungle star or jungle track,
Strong bronzed men, or regal black
Women from whose loins I sprang
When the birds of Eden sang?
One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?

COUNTEE CULLEN

THE table had been cleared and the coffee was being poured. The Easter Sunday luncheon was almost over and we were stirring the sugar in our cups. It was so quiet that the footfalls from the tranquil Paris street below echoed upward. It was one of those moments when, for no reason, a spell of silence hangs in the air. I sipped my coffee and stared at the grey walls of the University of Paris that loomed beyond the window.

One of my guests, Dorothy, the wife of George Padmore, the West Indian author and journalist, turned to me and asked:

"Now that your desk is clear, why don't you go to Africa?"

The idea was so remote to my mind and mood that I gaped at her a moment before answering.

"*Africa?*" I echoed.

"Yes. The Gold Coast," she said stoutly.

"But that's four thousand miles away!" I protested.

"There are planes and ships," she said.

My eyes ranged unseeingly about the room. I felt cornered, uneasy. I glanced at my wife.

"Why not?" she said.

A moment ago I had been collected, composed; now I was on the defensive, feeling poised on the verge of the unknown.

"Africa!" I repeated the word to myself, then paused as something strange and disturbing stirred slowly in the depths of me. I am African! I'm of African descent. . . . Yet I'd never seen Africa; I'd never really known any Africans; I'd hardly ever thought of Africa. . . .

"Kwame Nkrumah, the Prime Minister, is going to table his motion for self-government in July," Dorothy said.

"It would be a great experience for you," my wife said.

I heard them, but my mind and feelings were racing along another and hidden track. *Africa!* Being of African descent, would I be able to feel and know something about Africa on the basis of a common "racial" heritage? Africa was a vast continent full of "my people." . . . Or had three hundred years imposed a psychological distance between me and the "racial stock" from which I had sprung? Perhaps some Englishman, Scotsman, Frenchman, Swede, or Dutchman had chained my great-great-great-grandfather in the hold of a slave ship; and perhaps that remote grandfather had been sold on an auction block in New Orleans, Richmond, or Atlanta. . . . My emotions seemed to be touching a dark and dank wall. . . . *But, am I African?* Had some of my ancestors sold their

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relatives to white men? What would my feelings be when I looked into the black face of an African, feeling that maybe his great-great-great-grandfather had sold my great-great-great-grandfather into slavery? Was there something in Africa that my feelings could latch onto to make all of this dark past clear and meaningful? Would the Africans regard me as a lost brother who had returned?

WHEN I awakened on the morning of the 16th of June, I was at once conscious of a strange, dead quiet. The ship's diesel engines had ceased to throb; stillness gripped my narrow cabin. We had docked! I leaped out of my bunk-bed and peered through the porthole and saw Africa. . . .

I dressed hurriedly and went on deck; an African city, under a blanket of blue mist, lay spread out before me. The heat was heavy, close, wet; and the city—Takoradi—seethed with activity at even this early hour. On the wharf was a forest of derricks, cranes, sheds, machines and, as I looked closer, I could see that they were being operated by black men—a fact that must have produced pain in the heart of Dr. Malan of South Africa, for he had sworn that black men were incapable of doing these things.

I studied the swirling crowd on the docks and found it hard to distinguish men from women, for practically everyone had a richly coloured cloth draped about him, and almost everyone was barefooted except the policemen who, to my horror, were dressed in dark blue wool! I wondered how they could stand it. . . .

I descended to the customs shed where it was twice as hot as it had been on board. A young man approached me.

"Mr. Wright?"

"Yes."

"I'm meeting you for the Prime Minister."

He was Mr. Ansah, short, black, alert, a personal friend of Nkrumah. He guided me through customs and informed me that a government transport bus would take me to Accra, the capital. Emerging from the customs shed, I saw Africa for the first time with frontal vision: black life was everywhere. My eyes were riveted upon a woman wearing a brightly coloured length of cloth which held a baby strapped to her back; the infant's legs were sprawled about the woman's hips and thighs, and the tiny head of the baby lolled in sleep with sweat beading on its forehead. The cloth held the weight of the baby's body and was anchored straight across the woman's breasts, cutting deeply into the flesh. Another woman was washing in a pan set on the ground; she was bent at an angle of forty-five degrees in the broiling sun, her black child also sound asleep upon her back. The babies of other women were awake, their wide, innocent eyes avoiding the broad blank expanse of their mother's backs, looking at the world from side to side. Then I was startled by a European family threading its way through the black crowd.

"They are the minority here, huh, Mr. Ansah?" I asked.

He roared with laughter.

"It's good *not* to be a minority for once, eh?" he asked.

"I admit it," I said. "Say, how do they behave?"

"All right," he said. "It's the high officials who need watching. Individuals like these are generally polite; they have to be. They're dependent upon us, you see."

We walked past black traffic officers, black policemen, gangs of black workmen; and, in the locomotive of a train, I saw a black fireman and a black engineer. The whole of life that met the eyes was black. I turned my attention to my host.

"You're a businessman, I take it?"

"Yes. I hope you're not opposed to businessmen."

"Not if they're working for the freedom of their country," I told him.

He laughed heartily and grabbed my hand.

"Just what do you do?" I asked him.

"Timber. I cut it, dress it, draw it, and ship it to all parts of the world."

"How many men do you employ?"

"About two hundred. Say, would you mind coming with me to the store? I must do a bit of shopping. . . ."

We entered a huge, modern store that reminded me of a unit in the American Atlantic

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and Pacific grocery chain; it was managed by the British but staffed with Africans. As Mr. Ansah shopped, I wandered about. I examined an enamelled pot that would hold about a quart of liquid; it was priced at £1! Or $2.80! A salesman came up to me.

"You wish to buy something, sar?"

"No; I'm just looking."

"You're American, aren't you, sar?"

"Yes; how did you know?"

"Oh, we know, sar," he said. Another salesman joined him. "What part of Africa did you come from, sar?"

I stared at him and then laughed. I felt uneasy.

"I don't know."

"Didn't your mother or grandmother ever tell you what part of Africa you came from, sar?"

I didn't answer. I stared vaguely about me. I had, in my childhood, asked my parents about it, but they had no information, or else they hadn't wanted to speak of it. I remembered that many Africans had sold their people into slavery; it had been said that they had had no idea of the kind of slavery into which they had been selling their people, but they had sold them. . . . I suddenly didn't know what to say to the men confronting me.

"Haven't you tried to find out where in Africa you came from, sar?"

"Well," I said softly, "you know, you fellows who sold us and the white men who bought us didn't keep any records."

Silence stood between us. We avoided each other's eyes.

NEXT morning a phone call came from the Prime Minister's office; I was told that at four o'clock I'd be picked up by the Prime Minister's car and that I'd see "something."

And at four o'clock a sleek car entered the driveway. A uniformed chauffeur stepped out and saluted me; I climbed into the back seat. As we went through the city black faces jerked around, recognising the car. We came to the Prime Minister's residence and pulled into a driveway. I got out and young black faces smiled at me. A few policemen hovered in the background. I was led forward into a red, two-story brick dwelling that looked remarkably like a colonial mansion in Georgia or Mississippi. I followed my guide upstairs, down a hallway, and into a living room.

The Prime Minister, dressed in a smock, was standing in the middle of the floor.

"Welcome!" he said.

"I'm glad to see you and your people," I told him.

"How are you?"

"Fine, but panting to see your party and your comrades."

He laughed. He presented me to a series of his friends whose strange names I did not recall, then we sat down.

"I want to take you on a quick tour of the city," he told me.

"I'm truly honoured."

"Nothing has been prepared. I want you to see how these people respond to our appeals. . . ."

"What's going to happen in July?" I asked, referring to the coming meeting of the Legislative Assembly.

The Prime Minister threw back his head and laughed. I got used, in time, to that African laughter. It was not caused by mirth; it was a way of indicating that, though they were not going to take you into their confidence, their attitude was not based upon anything hostile.

"You are direct," he said.

"Why not?" I asked.

"You'll have to wait and see," he told me.

I studied Nkrumah; he was fairly slightly built, a smooth jet black in colour; he had a longish face, a pair of brooding, almost frightened eyes, a set of full, soft lips. His head held a thick growth of crinkly hair and his hands moved with slow restlessness, betraying a contained tension. His bodily motions were almost deliberate and at times his face seemed like a blank mask. One could almost feel the force of his preoccupations as he would jerk his head when his attention darted. His questions and answers were simple and to the point; I felt that he had much more on his mind than he permitted to pass his lips; he was the full-blown politician whose consciousness was anchored in concrete, practical concerns pointing towards a fondly sought goal. . . .

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His colleagues drew him into a discussion that was conducted in tribal language; when it was over, he announced:

"Let's go!"

His personal bodyguard stood at attention; it was composed of hand-picked militants and faithfuls of the Convention People's Party. He led the way and I followed down into the street where his motorcycle escort, dressed in scarlet, stood lined up near their machines. The Prime Minister waved his hand to signal that all was ready. The motorcyclists raced their engines to a deafening roar; then they pulled slowly into the street, leading the way. The Prime Minister's car, with the Prime Minister seated on my right, followed.

The sun was still shining as we moved slowly forward. The drone of the motorcycles attracted the attention of people on both sides of the street and, spontaneously, men, women, and children abandoned what they were doing and fronted the car. Others rushed pell-mell out of shacks, their faces breaking into wide, glad smiles and, lifting their hands upward with their elbows at the level of their hips, palms fronting forward—a kind of half-Nazi salute—they shouted a greeting to the Prime Minister in a tone of voice compounded of passion, exhortation, and contained joy:

"Free—doom! Free—doooooom!"

Ahead of the car the sides of the streets turned black with faces. We reached a wide roadway and the crowds swirled, shouting:

"Free-dooom! Free—dooom!"

"Kwame! Kwame!" They shouted his name.

"Fight! Fight!"

"Akwaba! Akwaba!" ("Welcome! Welcome!")

The road turned into a black river of eager, hopeful, glad faces whose trust tugged at the heart. The crowds grew thicker. The shouting sounded like a cataract. The Prime Minister, smiling, laughing, lifted his right hand as he returned their salute.

The road led into a slum area, and the Prime Minister turned to me and said:

"This is James Town. I want you to see this too. . . . I want you to see all we have, the good and the bad."

The narrow streets filled quickly and the car ploughed slowly through nostalgic crowds of men, women, and children who chanted:

"Free—dooooom!"

I was astonished to see women, stripped to the waist, their elongated breasts flopping wildly, do a sort of weaving, circular motion with their bodies, a kind of queer shuffling dance which expressed their joy in a quiet, physical manner. It was as if they were talking with the movements of their legs, arms, necks, and torsos; as if words were no longer adequate as a means of communication; as if sounds could no longer approximate their feelings; as if only the total movement of their entire bodies could indicate in some measure their acquiescence, their surrender, their approval.

And then I remembered: I'd seen these same snakelike, veering dances before. . . . Where? Oh, God, yes; in America, in store-front churches, in Holy Roller Tabernacles, in God's Temples, in unpainted wooden prayer-meeting houses on the plantations of the Deep South. . . . And here I was seeing it all again against a background of a surging nationalistic political movement! How could that be?

When I'd come to Africa, I didn't know what I'd find, what I'd see; the only prepossession I'd had was that I'd doubted that I'd be able to walk into the African's cultural house and feel at home and know my way around. Yet, what I was now looking at in this powerfully improvised dance of these women, I'd seen before in America! How was that possible? And, what was more, this African dance today was as astonishing and dumbfounding to me as it had been when I'd seen it in America.

Never in my life had I been able to dance more than a few elementary steps, and the carrying of even the simplest tune had always been beyond me. So, what had bewildered me about Negro dance expression in the United States now bewildered me in the same way in Africa.

We rode on through the cheering throngs. Whenever the car slowed, the black faces, laughing and excited, with heads thrown back, with white teeth showing, would press close to the windows of the car and give vent to:

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"Free—doooom!"

But my emotions were preoccupied with another problem. How much am I a part of this? How much was I part of it when I saw it in America? Why could I not feel this? Why that peculiar, awkward restraint when *I* tried to dance or sing? The answers to those questions did not come until after I penetrated deep into the African jungle. . . . On we rode. The crowds surged, danced, sang, and shouted, but I was thinking of my mother, of my father, of my brother. . . . I was frankly stunned at what I saw; there was no rejection or condemnation; there was no joy or sorrow; I was just stupefied. Was it possible that I was looking at myself laughing, dancing, singing, gliding with my hips to express my joy . . . ? Had I denied all this in me? If so, then why was it that when I'd tried to sing, as a child, I'd not been able to? Why had my hands and feet, all my life, failed to keep time? It was useless to say that I'd inhibited myself, for my inability to do these things predated any desire, conscious or unconscious, on my part. I had wanted to, because it had always been a part of my environment, *but I had never been able to!*

"What do you think?" the Prime Minister asked.

"It's most impressive," I said.

"They're an unspoiled, a spiritually virgin people," he said.

We came at last to a block of cement houses; from windows and doorways black faces shouted and called:

"Kwame! Kwame!"

"Free—dooom! Free—doooom!"

The car stopped and the Prime Minister got out; I followed him.

"What is this?" I asked him.

"This is a meeting of the Women's Division of the party," he told me.

We entered a concrete compound and sat as the meeting, dedicated to reorganisation and instalment of new officers, got under way. A tall black woman led a chant:

"*Forward ever, backward never . . .*"

There was a relaxed, genial atmosphere; now and then an easy laugh floated over the crowd. The men, clad in their native togas, sat in the rear, rising occasionally to aid in making seating arrangements. In front sat about two hundred women also clad in their native cloths and, for this ceremony, they wore an enormous amount of gold in their ears, around their necks, on their arms and fingers. The yellow sheen of the gold against the background of black skin made a startling combination in the red rays of the dying sun. There was one fat, black woman who, I'd have said, had at least three or four thousand dollars' worth of gold on her arms and around her neck, and it was pure native gold, mixed with no alloy. . . .

A psalm was sung in English. Next, an African of the Christian persuasion stepped forward and, in English, led the group in prayer. Then came a pagan chief with his umbrella, his staff, his "linguist" and proceeded to pour a libation of corn wine to the dead ancestors. The two religions nestled smugly, cheek by jowl, and the setting sun shone as calmly as usual; there was not a tremor in the universe. . . . After he emptied the bowl by dribbling the corn wine upon the ground, the chief had the bowl filled again and he passed it around to each person nearby and they took three sips. (Three is the lucky number among many Africans of the Gold Coast.)

A series of speakers rose, both men and women, and, in a mixture of English and tribal tongues, exhorted the women to give all their support to the Leader, to the Convention People's Party, and to the struggle for national liberation. To this already turgid brew was added still another ingredient; a woman rose and proclaimed:

"I'm Mrs. Nkrumah!"

A howl of laughter rose from the women. Puzzled, I looked at the Prime Minister; he grinned at me, and said:

"It's a joke."

"I *am* Mrs. Nkrumah!" the woman said in a voice that sought to still all doubts.

The Prime Minister rose and, sweeping his arms to include all the women, said:

"You are *all* my brides!"

The women laughed and clapped. Nkrumah, of course, was a bachelor.

"I have to say that to them," he whispered

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to me as he sat again. "Now, tell me, do you understand what you are looking at?"

"You have fused tribalism with modern politics," I said.

"That's exactly it," he said. "Nobody wanted to touch these people. The missionaries would go just so far, and no farther towards them. One can only organise them by going where they are, living with them, eating with them, sharing their lives. We are making a special drive to enlist women in the party; they have been left out of our national life long enough. In the words of Lenin, I've asked the cooks to come out of their kitchens and learn how to rule."

The new women officials to be installed were called to come forward and stand fronting the Prime Minister. A short statement of aims and duties was read to them and, at the end, each woman was asked to raise her right hand and repeat the following oath (I'm paraphrasing this from memory):

"I pledge with all my life my support to the Convention People's Party, and to my Leader, Kwame Nkrumah; I swear to follow my Leader's guidance, to execute faithfully his commands, to resist with all my power all imperialist attempts to disrupt our ranks, to strive with all of my heart to rebuild our lost nations, Ghana, so help me God!"

. . . An oath to a Leader? In the 20th century? Then I reflected. Well, why not? This oath was perhaps the most rational pledge that these women had ever given in all of their lives. Before this they had sworn oaths to invisible gods, pagan and Christian, and now, at last, they were swearing an oath that related directly to their daily welfare. And would these illiterate and myth-minded women have understood an abstract oath taken to a flag or a constitution? In the light of their traditions and culture, this oath seemed logical to them, for the swearing of oaths was a common feature of their rituals. And, in a society ruled by chiefs decked out in gold and silk, what symbol other than that of a living man, a man whom they could see, hear, speak to, check upon his actions—what symbol other than a living one could make them feel that their oath was really binding . . . ? Indeed, the taking of this oath was perhaps the only act in their lives that they had performed over whose consequences they would have some measure of control.

NEXT morning, when I awakened, my sense of amazement at what I'd seen was, if anything, stronger than it had been the day before. I'd seen something new under the sun. What a bewildering unity Nkrumah had forged: Christianity, tribalism, paganism, sex, nationalism, socialism, housing, health, and industrial schemes . . . !

Last night I hadn't had time to question myself closely regarding that snakelike, shuffling dance, that strange veering and weaving of the body. . . . That there was some kind of link between the native African and the American Negro was undoubtedly true. But what did it mean? A certain group of American anthropologists had long clamoured for a recognition of what they had quaintly chosen to call "African survivals," a phrase which they had coined to account for exactly what I had observed. And now, as I reflected upon last night's experience, even more items of similarity came to me: that laughter that bent the knee and turned the head (as if in embarrassment!); that queer shuffling of the feet when one was satisfied or in agreement; that inexplicable, almost sullen silence that came from disagreement or opposition. . . . All of this was strange but familiar.

The bafflement evoked in me by this new reality did not spring from any desire to disclaim kinship with Africa, or from any shame of being of African descent. My problem was how to account for this "survival" of Africa in America when I stoutly denied the mystic influence of "race," when I was as certain as I was of being alive that it was only, by and large, in the concrete social frame of reference in which men lived that one could account for men being what they were. I sighed; this was truly a big problem. . . .

Restless, I sought the streets of Accra just to look at Africa. And while strolling along I found, for the first time in my life, a utilitarian function for nappy hair; the clerks and school children stuck their red and yellow pencils in

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their hair in order not to lose them, and they never did, so close and secure did their kinks cling to those pencils. Some children carried their ink bottles and schoolbooks on their heads, their arms swinging free as they walked. I saw a little girl peel an orange to eat it; she broke the orange in two, put one half of it upon her head and proceeded, as she walked along, to eat the other half; when she had devoured it, she reached up nonchalantly and got the remaining half of the orange and commenced to nibble away at it.

Bracing myself to encounter rebuffs, I strayed off the main thoroughfares and entered a maze of warrens—compounds—enclosed by stone walls. I blinked; before me was a scene crowded with scores of people, men, women, children, and everything seemed to be happening at once. . . . The over-all impression was that the black human beings had so completely merged with the dirt that one could scarcely tell where humanity ended and the earth began; they lived in and of the dirt, the flesh of bodies seeming to fuse insensibly with the soil.

Wilted from the heat, I made my way back to the government bungalow and found a strange young African waiting at the door to talk to me.

"What can I do for you?" I asked him.

"Dr. Wright——" he began.

"Please, I'm no doctor of any kind," I told him.

"Well, sar," he said, smiling. "I work for the English family next door. . . ."

"Yes?"

"You're an American, sar? Aren't you?"

"Yes; I am."

"Maybe you can help me, sar? Please," he begged.

"I'll try. But what is it?"

"You see, sar, we don't like the British. I met American soldiers during the war and they were nice, sar," he explained. "Now, sar, I want to educate myself. I want to take a correspondence course from America and I need help, sar."

"Just what sort of help do you need and what kind of a course do you want to take?" I asked.

"I want to be a detective, sar," he said.

"What?" I thought that I hadn't heard him.

"A detective, sar. Like the ones you see in the movies," he made himself explicit.

"And you want to take all of this in the form of a correspondence course from America?"

"That's right, sar," he said, smiling, glad that at last I'd understood him.

"Now, just how can I help you in that?"

"Well, sar, money is controlled here. I went to the post office, sar, to buy dollars and they wouldn't sell them to me. They said that I'd have to go to a bank, sar. Well, I went to the bank and they said no; they wouldn't sell me dollars, sar. They said I'd have to get the government to okay my application for dollars. Then I went to the government, sar, and talked to a young Englishman."

"And what did he say?"

"Sar, he said I couldn't have any dollars. . . . You see, sar, the English are jealous of us. They never want us to do anything, sar. . . ."

"Why wouldn't the Englishman let you have the dollars?"

"He just wouldn't, sar. He said that I could take a course in how to be a detective from London, sar."

"From London?" I echoed.

"Yes, sar; that's exactly what he said, sar."

I looked at him, at his pleading eyes, at those half-parted, waiting lips, at the slight stoop of respect in his bodily posture.

"Come onto the terrace," I told him.

He followed me and stood respectfully as I sat.

"Sit down," I said.

"Thank you, sar," he said, sitting.

"From where did you get this notion of becoming a detective?"

"In a magazine. . . . You know, sar. One of these American magazines. . . . They tell about crimes. I got it right in my room now, sar. Shall I get it for you, sar?"

"No; no; that's not necessary. Now, just why do you want to become a detective?"

"To catch criminals, sar."

"What criminals?"

He stared at me as though he thought that I'd taken leave of my senses.

"The English, sar!" he exclaimed. "Sar, we Africans don't violate the law. This is *our* country, sar. It's the English who came here

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and fought us, took our land, our gold, and our diamonds, sar. If I could be a good detective, sar, I'd find out how they did it. I'd put them in jail, sar."

It was all clear now. But the pathos of it stilled my tongue for several moments. . . .

How could I get at the boy? He was hugging to his heart a delusive dream and he was determined not to surrender it; if he had to let that dream go, he'd hate whoever robbed him of it. But that false dream stood between him and his seeing reality for what it was, coloured his vision regarding the value of being a detective. . . .

"I'll have to think about this," I told him with a sigh.

He thanked me and left; I went upstairs and sat in a chair and shook my head. Good God. . . . Did the men who had administered this colony before the coming of Nkrumah know that this sort of rot was simmering in the minds of boys? Maybe they had known it and had not cared? No; I was inclined to feel that they had not known it, for, if they had, I was sure that they would have been frightened. But what stunned me most about the boy was his absolute distrust of the British; it was by far the deepest emotion of his life.

All the metal in my toilet kit turned a deep, dark red. I rubbed my fingers across the metal and a soft mound of wet rust rolled up. What a climate. . . . What could last here? Suppose the Gold Coast was cut off from the Western world, for, say, ten years? Would not the material level of existence be reduced to that which existed before the coming of the white man? Practically nothing, under British colonial policy, was manufactured in the Gold Coast. Indeed, the only ostensible difference between the environmental conditions of the bourgeois blacks and the tribal blacks consisted in the possession by the upper-class blacks of a mass of imported British products in their homes. The British argument until now has been that the climate ruled out industrial production, but I was convinced that this was a British "rationalisation" to keep down potential industrial competition. I was sure that if the British *had* to industrialise the Gold Coast, they would have found a way of doing it. . . . Until some effort was made to preserve metal against corrosion, this place was under a sentence of death. And I realised that whatever history was buried in this hot and wet earth must have long since decayed, melted back into the red and ravenous clay. No wonder that archæologists, no matter how long and earnestly they dig, could find little or nothing here. Throw the whole of Detroit into this inferno of heat and wetness, and precious little of it would be left in a hundred years.

Restless, I wander again into the streets and am struck by the incredible number of mere tots engaged in buying and selling. I've begun to feel that, as a whole, there is no period of "youth" here in Africa. Here, at one moment, one is a child; then, almost overnight, at the age of eight or ten, one assumes the status of an adult. Children toil at minding smaller children, cooking, carrying water on their heads, trading in the market place, assuming responsibilities long before the children of the West. Perhaps "youth" is a period of luxury which middle-class Westerners alone could give their children?

Maybe that was why one so seldom encountered what might be called "idealism" in Africa? Perhaps there was no time for dreaming —and how could one get the notion that the world could be different if one did not dream? Though the African's whole life was a kind of religious dream, the African scorned the word "dream." Maybe the plant of African personality was pruned too quickly, was forced to bear fruit before it had a chance to grow to its full height? What would happen to a romantic rebel in an African tribe? The African takes his religion, which is really a waking *dream*, for reality, and all other dreams are barred, are taboo.

In the late afternoon a rainstorm broke over the city; it had been threatening for some hours and when it did come, it came down with a violence that made you feel that some malevolent being was bent upon harm. Nature here acts with such directness, suddenness, that the

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mind, in spite of itself, projects out upon natural events animistic motives. After the first cloudburst the rain settled down to a long, steady downpour. The air was still; I could almost feel the moisture enter my lungs as I breathed. It was not until after ten o'clock that the sky cleared and the stars could be seen, distant, mingled with clouds.

Again I poked about the alleyways of James Town. Now that the rain had stopped, the gregarious natives were returning to the streets. At corners women were lighting candles and huddling themselves besides their piles of staples. Plantains were being dropped into cauldrons of boiling fat. Finding myself out of cigarettes, I paused in front of a woman.

"A can of cigarettes," I said, pointing.

She stared, then opened a can and took out one cigarette.

"No; I want to buy a can," I said.

She turned and called, summoning help. Cigarettes were sold in round tin cans of fifty each and they were vacuum-packed against the moisture. A young girl came; she and the woman chatted.

"No; she sell you *one*," the girl was emphatic.

"Why won't she sell me a can?"

"She can't," Again she talked to the woman in tribal language, then she turned to me once more. "She sell can for one pound."

A tin of cigarettes cost but seven shillings. Was she trying to cheat?

"That's too much," I protested.

"You can buy *three*; that's all," the girl said.

I finally understood the crisis that I'd brought into the woman's life. In this poverty-stricken area rarely did a native buy more than one cigarette at a time, and I had confronted her with a demand for fifty, which was wholesale business!

I pushed forward in the dark down lanes of women sitting besides their boxes, their faces lit by flickering candles. As I strayed on I heard the sound of drums. Yes; I'd find them. . . . Guided by the throbbing vibrations, I went forward until I came to a vast concrete enclosure. The drums were beating behind that high wall. . . . Could I get in? I went around the wall until I came to a narrow opening. Discreetly I peered through and saw, far back into the compound, a group of people dancing to drums; kerosene lanterns lit up the tableau. Ought I go in? They were black and so was I. But my clothes were different from theirs; they would know me for a stranger.

A young man came towards me; he was about to enter the compound. He paused and asked:

"What do you want?"

"Nothing," I said, smiling at him. "What's going on there?"

"You're a stranger, aren't you?"

"Yes; I'm an American."

"Come on in," he said.

I followed him in, noticing as I passed a row of dim-lit rooms that in some rooms only men were seated and in others only women. . . . We came to a swirling knot of men and women; they were dancing in a wide circle, barefooted, shuffling to the demoniacal beat of the drums which were being pounded by a group of men near the wall. The ground was wet from the recent rain and their bare feet slapped and caressed the earth.

"Why are they dancing?" I asked the young man.

"A girl has just died," he told me.

There was no sadness or joy on their faces; they struck me as being people who had to go through with something and they were doing their job. Indeed, most of the faces seemed kind of absentminded. Now and then some man or woman would leave the ring and dance alone in the centre. They danced not with their legs or arms, but with their entire bodies, moving slowly, undulating their abdomens, their eyes holding a faraway look.

"Why are they dancing?" I asked again, recalling that I'd asked the same question before, but feeling that I hadn't had an answer.

"A young girl has just died, you see," he said.

I still didn't know why they were dancing and I wanted to ask him a third time. An old man came to me and shook my hand, then offered me a chair. I sat and stared. The lanterns cast black shadows on the wet ground as the men and women moved slowly to the beat of the drums, their hands outstretched, their

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fingers trembling. *Why are they dancing . . . ?* It was like watching something transpire in a dream. Still another young man came and joined the two who now flanked my chair. They mumbled something together and then the young man who had brought me in stooped and whispered:

"You'd better go now, sar."

I rose and shook hands with them, then walked slowly over the wet earth, avoiding the rain puddles. *Why are they dancing . . . ?* And their dancing was almost identical with the movements of the High Life dancing that I'd seen in the outdoor dance hall. . . . At the entrance I paused and looked back; I was surprised to see that the young man had discreetly followed me.

"You say that a young girl has died?"

"Yes, sar."

"And that's why they are dancing?"

"Yes, sar."

I shook his hand and walked into the damp streets, my eyes aware of the flickering candles that stretched to both sides of me. Jesus Christ, I mumbled. I turned and retraced my steps and stood again in the entrance to the compound and saw that the men and women were now holding hands as they circled round and round. The young man stood watching me. . . .

"Good night!" I called to him.

"Good night, sar!" he answered.

I walked briskly and determinedly off, looking over my shoulder and keeping in the line of my vision that dance; I stared at the circling men and women until I could see them no more. The women had been holding their hands joined together above the heads of the men, and the men, as though they had been playing London Bridge Is Falling Down, were filing with slow dignity through the hand-made arches. The feet of the dancers had barely lifted from the ground as they shuffled; their bodies had made sharp angles as they moved and I had been surprised that they were moving much quicker than I had thought; they had given me the impression of moving slowly, lazily, but, at that distance, there was a kind of concentrated tension in their gyrations, yet they were utterly relaxed. I had been looking backward as I walked and then the young man pulled the wooden gate shut and it was gone forever. . . . I had understood nothing. I was black and they were black, but my blackness did not help me.

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David Riesman

Man and Machine in America

TECHNICAL progress certainly remains an ideal for a great many Americans —Jacques Barzun has referred to "America's romance with practicality." But it is usually European novelists and philosophers who have seen the United States on the rapid road to technocracy. It is worth noting that the American technicians themselves, with rare exceptions, have no such visions; on the contrary, many are quite uncomfortable about their present situation. As an illustration of this, I can cite several recent reminders of the increasing defensiveness of engineers—a group which, as recently as the Age of Hoover, had ranked comfortably high among the professions as the bearers of progress, hard common sense, efficiency, and other indisputably good things. On one occasion an engineering society invited me and a colleague of mine to advise them about what could be done to make engineers more "cultivated": the group felt very apologetic about being good with slide-rules or transistors but not with people or Shakespeare. On another occasion, students at the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale expressed their bewilderment and resentment at the fact that, when they spoke to their girl-friends or to literary Yalemen about jet engines, they were accused of "talking shop"; while the latter, when they chatted about Proust, Elizabethan poetry, or the future of the United Nations were thought to be unequivocally "cultivated" and fit for social gatherings! In each instance, the engineers rather mournfully asked what they must do to be saved.

But at the very moment when the prestige associated with Technics is uncomfortably retreating in America before the prestige of Culture, many of the less industrially developed countries are seeking to attain self-respect and national status by going in for steel plants and automobile assembly lines, even where it can be demonstrated to them that improvement of agricultural techniques or of means of transportation might promise more tangible economic gains. When, at a meeting in 1952 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an American economist, Walt Rostow, made this point, he was criticised by representatives of "underdeveloped" countries for his emphasis on "mere" material well-being! He was put in the position of having to reply that of course he was not against ideals—he understood the quixotic appeal of assembly lines. Indeed, it was the Africans and Asians at this meeting who tended to be the "eager-beavers," the romantic strivers after "efficiency," the unquenchable optimists, whereas the Americans were worldly-wise, full of sober second-thoughts, and quite free of missionary zeal or cant. It was almost as if the traditional trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific conversations had somehow got their labels switched.

As we Americans begin to rise above the industrial evangelism of our own past, we also make things very annoying for those of us who are in love with older definitions of efficiency. Even in his best days, the efficiency expert, Frederick Winslow Taylor, had a terrible time trying to persuade Americans to work

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efficiently: he would raise productivity and real wages only to be hated by workmen and fired by management. It is men trained in the thinking of the human-relations expert, Elton Mayo, not of the efficiency expert, Taylor, who are now in demand—men who don't drive too hard, men who can create a happy atmosphere, men who aren't too infuriated with waste. Sometimes I think that we tend to export our remaining zealots of efficiency on Point IV or Ford Foundation missions, where they can speak for "American methods" as they never could at home.

Recent immigrants to America and their immediate descendants, in their complex effort to become "Americanised," sometimes engage in some of the same misinterpretation of what that process means that foreign visitors are apt to do: that is, they conceive America in terms already out of date among the better-educated and more assimilated groups. To put it bluntly, they believe that the way to get ahead is to work hard. Recently I had a letter from a former student, now a private in the army, concerning the army's dependence on this latter sort of immigrant behaviour. He writes: "Several of our cadre around the Fort here are Armenians, Greeks, Italians, Hungarians, and Yugoslavs, etc.—and almost without exception they are great believers in the meritoriousness of 'hard work,' and 'principled behaviour.' The Army depends on these, plus the few Anglo-Saxon-Puritan-ethic people, to get its work done. The Army requires such work-minded people who try to do a good job of whatever they're told to do, no matter how odious the task, simply because it is 'wrong' and 'disgraceful' to do anything but a good job."

To be sure, the perspective of this letter is somewhat one-sided: it necessarily leaves out of account what the East and South Europeans have done to make Americans fonder of good food, good song, and the leisurely life generally. But at the same time, it is part of the evidence for the generalisation that industrial development usually requires new sorts of people, the older sorts having become "soft." In this connection, I was struck by the findings of a recent sociological study on the origins of leading American natural scientists. A disproportionately high number, it was discovered, come from small-town or rural backgrounds and attended small liberal arts colleges in the Mid-West and Far West. One might plausibly interpret this data as follows: as youngsters, these men had known little luxury and less occupational diversity; hence their college science teacher could strike them as a figure of moment, and if he invited them to work, let us say, on a carbon ring or a physics text, they were wedded to science (in a perhaps somewhat narrow and pragmatic view of it) for life. They had formed a work-minded character while young, and then the life of research came to seem to them the pinnacle of service and ambition. By comparison, students from the cities, from the upper social strata, attending larger and more cosmopolitan universities, would more often find such a career too narrow, and a college chemistry teacher too unexhilarating a model.

WHAT I have been trying to get at, in a number of different illustrative ways, is that American society appears to be undergoing profound transformations at the present moment, and that these transformations are carrying us increasingly further away from the way of thinking of countries where population presses heavily on food supply—countries which, now aware of other ways of life than their traditional one, want the "technical progress" which for many educated Americans has either become a game or something towards which one ought to feel snobbish and superior. America itself is becoming more differentiated—and yet in some respects more like the rest of the world—while the rest of the world seems to want to catch up with what America once was.

At last year's Massachusetts Institute of Technology meeting to which I have referred, one participant asked how non-American countries could, without prior mechanisation, acquire the industrial *esprit* that could spark general economic advance. Machines, he felt, gave an air to a society, a heady and impetuous air, which somehow went together with high productivity. I think there is something to this. Certainly the enthusiasm and æsthetic sense of

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the Italians for modern machine design may be connected with their rapid post-war recovery: minimising the snobbery or strangeness traditional cultures sometimes feel towards the very machines they both envy and desire. Skill and competence in making machines that excite international admiration engender confidence; they have a halo effect. Athens and Venice in their commercial heyday had this confidence: many American industrialists and organisers have it now. But how can one country borrow confidence from another, especially when that confidence rests in part on the very achievements that country is itself seeking?

Equally perplexing for the borrower is the discovery of how much American productivity depends on a casual yet calculated disregard or "sabotage" of prescribed operating procedures. The industrial sociologist, William F. Whyte, of Cornell, tells the story of the workmen in an oil-cracking plant in Oklahoma who got angry because, in a collective bargaining session, the management had referred to them as semi-skilled. They proceeded to carry out literally the instructions of the chemist, instructions which they had previously treated as a good chef will treat a recipe. The result was that the plant was soon brought to a halt. It turned out that they understood the idiosyncrasies of the machines better than did the supervisory staff—and they won a pay increase. Warner Bloomberg, Jr., a colleague of mine who has held many jobs as a factory worker, recounts many similar experiences, including the important role workmen play in mediating a customer's demands for accuracy according to their own knowledge of what is actually needed, thereby minimising the number of rejected pieces. Such "corruptions" and "indulgences" mediate between the formally prescribed and the empirically provided elements of production—they comprise an invisible overprint on a blueprint. All this suggests that countries which think it is easy to install "American methods" by copying blueprints or our own copybook maxims may be in for serious disillusionment.

Let me choose, as one illustration, an American business practice which has impressed a number of the productivity teams—the willingness of businessmen to share their production methods with each other. Instead of trade secrets, kept in the family or in the business, our managers often cannot wait to tell other managers, through the appropriate journals or meetings of the American Management Association and other trade associations, what short-cuts they have discovered. This sharing of information has perplexed European observers who had perhaps learned from American novelists, if not from Balzac and Dickens, that business was a cut-throat affair. To "explain" what they find, they tend to interpret this sharing as conscious policy of tit-for-tat, a kind of free trade in secrets, even a conspiratorial pool; and the Americans themselves, if charged with disloyalty within their own organisations, would very likely fall back on similar justifications. But it is my impression, though of course very difficult to support, that the sharing of business information has more to do with the growing professionalisation of management than with any conscious decisions to trade one secret for another. Officials who regard themselves as professionals find their fraternity not among *rentiers* but among people doing the same work in other companies as well as in their own company. They are tied to the company for which they work by that work, its interest and its perquisites, and not by stockholdings or family connections or tradition. They want to be thought fair-minded, professionally keen fellows, rather than ruthless and smart ones, and they can always rationalise the esteem they win for their own generosity and intelligence as part of the same Grail of "goodwill" their company is pursuing in its institutional advertising, its public and labour and stockholder relations, and in many other ways.

Sharing of information can actually be quite expensive to individual companies, not only in "giving away secrets" but in the actual costs of compiling and publishing reports, sending people to conventions, receiving visitors from other companies or from abroad; yet all this is done by American companies without afterthought, uncomplainingly; neither the accountant nor the internal revenue agent is likely to object, any more than to the charitable

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donations, or to the "pure" research which corporations are increasingly going in for.

All this, I suggest, is a facet of what I have elsewhere* described as the shift from "conspicuous consumption" to "conspicuous production" in American life, in which our surplus is spent at the source, so to speak, in the very processes of production, rather than distributed to stockholders or bankers and spent or hoarded according to private whim. Even in the late 19th century the American business leader was ordinarily at least as much concerned with finding an outlet for his social energies—and gaining status thereby—as with making a fortune. Indeed, in retrospect, it is sad to contemplate the vain struggle of the millionaire of that day for good repute: many pious ones sought to obey all the rules, and won only ridicule or antagonism; for a Carnegie or a Rockefeller there were few long-established, socially approved roads to take. While, of course, there are today many Americans who want to "make a fast buck" and succeed in doing so—mostly in small business—many big businessmen don't even dare spend a fast buck, but have their companies do it for them. If you want to find big businessmen still mightily driven by the entrepreneurial ethic in getting and spending, you may do best in the South and Southwest—or in Toronto: Canada already surpasses us proportionately in some indices of productivity, in spite of the fact that it has for generations exported many of its more enterprising French Canadians to the United States, thus keeping Quebec quaint for habitants and tourists alike.

Since up-to-date American corporations now have to learn the arts of conspicuous spending, they need tutors—just as European princes did or American tycoons. Business schools play a part as such tutors; so do management consultants; so do industrial architects and designers. There are corporate officials who are addicts of one or another of the many fads—committee management, incentive systems, operations analysis, and a hundred other plans—and go about the country stumping for these devices and their morale-building and profit-building virtues. For these "muscular Christians" of enterprise, trade does not necessarily follow the flag and the Bible; these men act in obedience to their self-image as proper businessmen, no matter how strenuously they insist (as, depending on mood, most Americans will insist) that they act only out of self-interest. In this modern atmosphere of sharing, of geniality, of muted competition and unmuted conspicuous production, who would be the Scrooge who would hoard trade secrets, or capital, or time?

In some ways, the Soviet Union is more "capitalistic" than America; having learned what it could from American engineers in the Age of Hoover, it still plainly lives in an epoch of tight-fisted capital accumulation and secrecy—though it will be interesting to see to what extent its managers, as they become more professional, will begin to imitate American patterns of conspicuous production. Conceivably this tight-fistedness may be one among many reasons why the Soviet Union has an appeal to "underdeveloped" countries that are even further away than the Soviet Union itself from the American plateau of opulence.

THE growing bureaucratisation of business in America is one reason why a career in business no longer captures the imagination of our most gifted young people; as in Europe, there is a tendency to look down on business as demeaning. The tragedies common enough a generation ago, of young men forced to go into their father's businesses when they would have liked to become artists or scholars, are much rarer today. For one thing, it isn't father's business any more, but the corporation's—the nepotism which was taken for granted at the turn of the century is now frowned upon. For another thing, father has lost his easy confidence that his way is the only way. So we find that the talents which in the 19th century found their entrepreneurial outlet in building a railway, a department store, a foundry, now find it in building a diocese (what industrialist is a match for Cardinal Spellman?), a labour union (what tycoon is as fiercely individualistic as John L. Lewis?), a new university or foundation (what promoter could not learn from Robert Hutchins?)—all the "tertiary" areas of the economy.

* *The Listener*, June 18th, 1953.

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In sum, much as a sect tends to become a church, or a new idea an orthodoxy, so a once-revolutionary economy comes to consist of more and less stabilised ways of doing business. The more stabilised ways, the traditions, provide a cushion against the shock of new developments; the traditions at the same time invite radical new developments by their very inelasticity in the face of moderate reform. In this country, after the Civil War, it was the economy that appeared more open to innovation than the churches or the law, whereas today the economy appears to many people as the official or vested part of society, where change is likely to be very slow. Who would have heard of Henry Luce if, like other of his Yale classmates, he had gone into banking or the railroads or the plate-glass business?

All these changes indicate that the United States may at the present time be an ambiguous model for countries wanting to be rich, or to be less poor. As you go on tour you may discover how inefficient Americans frequently are, how lacking in precise technical or professional knowledge, how inexpert and fuzzy our "experts" often are. Our industrial system is geared to, or around, this inefficiency; our amiability makes us put up with it; our concept of "know-how" is often a way of generalising our amateur spirit into a confident mood. There may well come a time when we will be sending productivity teams elsewhere, having exhausted our immigrant and rural resources of painstaking efficiency and work-mindedness prematurely—before, that is, having made production wholly automatic. At a recent conference, sponsored by *Fortune* magazine, I got the distinct impression that very few American engineers and industrialists were capable of easily imagining a factory without operatives; this blockage of imagination appeared to be hampering experimentation with full automatisation (as against experiment with ever more specialised transfer machines and machine tools). Simone Weil wrote, in *The Need for Roots*: "Up to now, technicians have never had anything else in mind than the requirements of manufacture. If they were to start having always present before them the needs of those who do the manufacturing, the whole technique of production would be slowly transformed." The American technicians, however, seem not to have been able to overlook the needs of those who presently do the manufacturing—at least, they have not been able to overlook them sufficiently to put their full ingenuity behind the up-to-date "requirements of manufacture" that might lead them to automatisation. They fear unconsciously, and often vocally, to go too far in replacing men by machines.

PERHAPS on your travels you will be shown the new Ford engine plant in Cleveland, and be told that this is automatic. But you will actually find it designed for operatives who, to be sure, do little physical work, but are attached to the highly specialised machines which move and shape material, whereas in a truly automatic factory a tape or other source of coded information would "instruct" far less specialised machines in the procedures for handling the particular product. The Ford engine plant is possibly a huge, new, proud example of the hardening of the American industrial imagination at its allegedly most advanced.

There is, however, one problem connected with automatisation which is not likely to come up on your trip, though it is highly relevant to what I have been saying about the image of American industry as efficient. It has already been remarked that the work-force in large modern plants covertly mediates between the rigid specifications insisted upon by the customer or the supervisor and their own informal knowledge that much looser specifications will still do the job. They know the idiosyncracies both of the customer and of the individual machines—in general, they know much more about the industrial process than they appear to know or get credit for knowing. Literal fulfilment of all plant regulations and obedience to blueprints would either halt production or make it excessively costly. But how can a tape be taught to deceive itself or disobey itself? How can the engineer who gives information to the machine know all the factory folklore which is in the workmen's hands and which he has previously, often unknowingly, depended upon? Will not the punched

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tape become a form of red tape, snarling the plant by virtue of its very orderliness and clarity?

Given the kinds of gaps that exist in America between what we do and what we say we do, I have no good answer to these questions. However, when I speculate about the prospects for the automatic factory in less industrially developed countries, I can see certain compensating advantages that might make experimentation with it worth while. Hitherto, whenever industry has gone into a folk culture, a tribal culture, it has been necessary forcibly to disrupt that culture to provide workmen. They have had to be taxed (as in South Africa or Dutch Indonesia) or tempted (as in the Tata Mills in India or the textile plants that have migrated from New Hampshire to North Carolina). Everywhere, people have had to be forced off the land, off the "reservation," and almost everywhere new values—punctuality, for instance—are instilled into them. The fully automatic factory could conceivably be installed with very little shift in local values: it needs a tiny work force—just as many as oil refineries. Such a factory, with its electronic brains, could obviate in some measure the unpleasant process of having natives work under non-native supervision: once the prefabricated plant was erected, nobody except a few maintenance men would work within it. Conflict would occur over what it should make and what should be done with the product by whom, but no conflict would arise—or human beings be "reformed"—within its walls.

Such notions will probably not be taken very seriously. But is not that because the way the Western world happened to achieve industrialisation exercises great fascination as *the* only way? As generals typically prepare for the last war, so many nations prepare to imitate an American industrial plant that may already be obsolete. When it was suggested to some people from Asia that vitamin factories, which are relatively inexpensive, might rather rapidly improve diet and well-being, it seemed to me that objections were too quickly found to a project which lacked "weight"—which approached industrial development, not the hard way, but the easy way. A certain asceticism operates here to limit the imagination. In the past, Puritanism has accompanied industrialisation, but now that the going concern of industry is here, and diffusable, I wonder if that ethic is still essential in anything like the same degree.*

We should, in sum, be wary of assuming that there is only one pattern of technical progress. We do know from the work of Pirenne, Sombart, Schumpeter, Robertson, Max Weber, and a host of other scholars that technology is not separate from the rest of culture, but is part of a climate which in the modern West includes Bach and Newton, Descartes and Calvin, and the monk who invented double-entry book-keeping. But we cannot know that there are no other combinations capable of producing similar end-results in the industrial plant. Nineteenth century systems of thought tend to obstruct us here. Thinkers of that epoch were preoccupied by the search for origins, the search for the stages through which historical development was bound to pass. Linear thinking prevailed. It was ethnocentric both in putting the West at the pinnacle of progress (or, in rare instances of inverse boastfulness, of decay) and in a kind of point-to-point evolutionism consonant with Western modes of thinking and speaking. Various forms of belief in monolithic inevitability fell in with the misleading analogy between societal development and the stages through which an individual organism must pass. Today, we have become more sceptical, but not always more creative. It is easier for us to break down the schemes of Malthus and Marx, Comte and Spencer, Veblen and Pareto, than to imagine potential alternative sequences.

* That crazy, gifted, travelling salesman, Charles Fourier, made the point quite well in his book, *Social Destinies*. After referring to poverty as "those most scandalous of all social disorders," he asks: "In what parts of the world has Civilisation made the most progress? In Athens, in Paris, in London, where men have been in no sense the friends of mediocrity or of truth, but on the contrary have been the slaves of their passions, and devoted to intrigues, to wealth, and to luxury. And where has Civilisation languished and remained stagnant? In Sparta, and in primitive Rome, where the voluptuous passions and the love of luxury had but a feeble development."

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J. B. Priestley

Pigs at Sea

ON the ferry that runs between Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, and Lymington, I came upon a neighbouring farmer, a rather melancholy middle-aged man called Marker. He is an excellent pig-breeder, generally crossing Wessex Saddlebacks with Large Whites. The pigs I had just seen penned between lorries and cars, on the deck below, were his. "I wouldn't sell this lot in Newport," he explained. I remembered then that his daughter was about to marry young Morris, who had just rented a tidy-sized farm Shorwell way. Marker, a conscientious father, was selling some pigs to provide his daughter with a dowry.

I went down to have a look at the beasts, who were still noisy. At first I heard nothing but the familiar gruntings, but after a minute or two, I found I could catch a word here and there. After another couple of minutes, I could understand everything they were saying. They knew of course that something important had happened to them, and this was the subject of their discussion.

"And now, friends," a formidable Large White boar began, "as your leader I will explain what I have in mind for you. I am, as you know, a Great Pig, a Pig of Destiny, to whom you have long entrusted the leadership of our herd. Naturally this move we are making now is part of a long-term plan of mine. Follow me and all will be well. Our future is bright with promise. There will be time and ample leisure later for you to offer me your thanks. Now I ask only for that loyalty, that devotion to our common cause, for which the herd of Chalkpit Farm has ever been famous." He waited for their hooftaps of applause.

"One question, sir," said a darkish Saddleback rather nervously. "What—er—will we find at the end of this troublesome journey?"

"What do you want, my friend?" enquired the Leader with some condescension.

"Well—at least a regular supply of barley and fish meal."

"And that is what you'll find I've provided for you, my friend. Short supply will be a thing of the past. All I ask is your loyal co-operation. *Westward—look—the land is bright,*" he concluded, with a fine roar, and then immediately went to sleep.

"All nonsense, of course," said a rather thin crossbred. "That pig is a personality, I grant you that, but he's a victim of the most monstrous powers of self-deception—and hopelessly out-of-date. This move has nothing to do with any plan of his. Or of any other individual pig. It is of course a mass movement."

"You mean, we all made up our minds to go?" said a very fat sow dubiously. "Because—I must say—I don't remember——"

"Naturally not," cried the thin crossbred contemptuously. "You don't understand what I'm talking about. If you'll keep quiet—and keep those children quiet—I'll explain. We know that somewhere west of us are enormous supplies of greens and roots——"

"How do we know that?" asked the darkish Saddleback.

"Don't interrupt. It's the only possible hypothesis. Now these supplies of greens and roots release into the prevailing wind certain odours, to which we pigs are sensitive owing to our peculiar olfactory development. When our reaction to the stimulus arrives at a certain tension, the inevitable result is a mass movement westward, towards the source of the stimuli."

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"I don't remember any of this," said the enormous sow. "And I've as keen a snout——"

"It's not a matter of consciousness and volition," the thin crossbred shouted angrily. "The reaction and subsequent movement are automatic. We are govérned by natural laws, just as much as the other species are. Although we've evolved into a higher form, so that Pig represents such mind as there is in the universe, we are still——"

But here he was interrupted by a tremendous old Large White, who had been asleep and was hardly awake when he began speaking. "Dear—dear—dear! I thought we'd done for ever with this mechanistic stuff."

"This is no time for a sermon," said the other crossly.

THE old Large White produced a rich fat chuckle. "There couldn't be a better time. It is when we are feeling disturbed, bewildered, trying to comprehend the ways of God to Pig, that something like a sermon is needed. When we say we don't want to be preached at, we are in fact asking for a preacher. It is when we are kicking stones in our despair that they suddenly build themselves into a pulpit. It is when——"

"I vote *No paradoxes*," cried a brisk young porker.

"Carried!" cried several others.

The old Large White amiably bared his tusks, then looked grave. "My friends, it is all very simple. We are in the hoofs and tusks of God. We have been created in His image. We have His promise that if we turn to him, with contrite hearts, He will not fail us. If He calls us to leave our familiar and dear Chalkpit Farm, to entrust ourselves to this strange moving sty, we must have faith in His purpose. He knows what is best for us. No doubt there are those among you who think it unlikely that a First Cause, who has called into existence, as we are told, millions and millions of suns even larger than our own, worlds unnumbered and without end, should be so deeply concerned with the fate of a few pigs, but there are mysteries we cannot fathom——"

"Speak for yourself." This was from a pig who had not spoken before, a rather wiry and very dark animal, with a murky brooding eye. "But don't offer us any of this false old comfort. I agree with you that these mechanistic theories are all nonsense, but so too is your idea of an all-seeing benevolent deity. I don't say that such a being doesn't exist. But he is certainly not in control of the universe we know, in which Pig has struggled to evolve, only to arrive at greater suffering. We are in fact at the mercy of an active Evil Principle. It is his agents, who go to work with all the enthusiasm of hate, who are responsible for this journey we are making. Although we often grumbled at Chalkpit Farm, we were in fact beginning to enjoy life there. This fact was noted by this infernal power or his agents, with the result——"

"My dear pig," cried a new voice, "you really can't expect us to listen to such old-fashioned nonsense. Some of us are pigs of education. Neither God nor the Devil is responsible for this move of ours. Our lives are governed by our fundamental economic needs. Supply and demand rule us. I have here some figures that prove beyond any doubt that——"

But he was not allowed to quote his figures, and when the uproar that had silenced him began to subside, another voice commanded our attention. It spoke with the almost supercilious precision of the expensively educated porker. "The economic factor is always present, of course, but our friend as usual is over-estimating its importance. You wish to understand why we find ourselves moving away from Chalkpit Farm? Now if you had any knowledge of the long history of Pig, you would remember that migrations of this kind occur regularly. There is, we know, a certain recurring pattern, a repeated urge to migrate, usually in a westerly direction, and so probably based on a primordial feeling that the Sungod should be sought where he was last seen. Thus, we move——"

"One moment, please." This came in a deep, slow tone from yet a third Large White, who appeared to have been lost up to now in a profound reverie. "How do we know we *are* moving? I speak, of course, as a metaphysician. And I suggest we have no real proof of movement. True, we no longer appear to be in our

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familiar sties at Chalkpit. But this, I must remind you, is mere appearance. We have to do with a group of sense impressions arranged in a certain order. That order, I admit, has suffered some sort of change. I will also admit that this change involves the creative act of a mind. But what do we mean when we refer to 'a mind?' Now between my individual mind—and, remember, I cannot assume yet that your minds exist—and the Absolute——"

"Come, come, Dr. Porker, be a pig," a youngish Saddleback shouted. "Face the situation like a pig, and stop droning about the Absolute, which is a mere linguistic device and does not refer to any reality. Pig has science now to guide him. Let us make use of it. The olfactory theory put forward, with astonishing confidence, by our friend and my erstwhile colleague, is ingenious, but, with all due respect, it simply won't do. We must take a closer look at the universe, which my studies enable me to do. We know now that it consists of what we might call interlocking fields of Swudge——"

"You may, I don't," cried one of the sows. "Swill, yes, though not fields of it, worse luck —but who ever heard of Swudge?"

"Swudge is our term for basic units of energy. We are ourselves, of course, so much Swudge. Now let us assume that a field of Swudge raised to a potential of Zuckoo, omitting for the time being any consideration of Professor Berkshire Black's theory of Tension Lowering By Negative Drift, has moved across the region of Chalkpit. Remember that the Swudge of which we ourselves are basically composed——"

"Blasphemous rubbish!" roared the theological Large White. "An insult to our Maker and all Pigkind! Swudge indeed! Let me tell you, there is in Pig a divine spark, created once and for all by the Holy Grunt. If we have faith——"

"Well said," cried the leader, waking at that moment. "I ask no more than that, my friends, together with instant obedience, hard rooting, and my usual first place in the trough. We are on our way at last, my friends, to prosperity, glory . . ."

"Suffering," said the dark dismal one, "because we are Pig, the eternal victim of the Evil Principle . . ."

"Why should we be surprised to find ourselves taking part in yet another migration sunwards? Our studies show us such movements . . ."

"We call it the Olfactory Pull . . ."

"Now Swudge at its lowest tension cannot resist . . ."

"Nothing, in short," Dr. Porker concluded, at the bottom of his voice, "has happened—or can happen. The Absolute remains . . ."

"We are promised His Mercy . . ."

"Oh, for goodness sake!" screamed several sows and gilts.

It was then that the little one, pushed into a corner, saw his chance to make himself heard. "I'm not particularly clever and learned like you pigs," he began apologetically. "And you must excuse me if I say that I'm not convinced by anything I've heard so far. I'm sorry, but I'm not. You see, all I know for certain is that we've had to leave home and are now on our way somewhere. And I can't help thinking that's all any of you know for certain. But I might as well have my guess just as you have had yours. And my guess is this—that in one way everything's a lot more complicated than you pigs think it is, and that in another way it's a lot simpler. It's more complicated because we live in a huge mysterious universe in which pigs perhaps don't amount to very much. There are kinds of life and things happening in it that even the cleverest pigs can't understand. And it's a lot simpler because it may be that we're being moved, not for any of the reasons you've given, but just because somebody or something stronger and cleverer has a plan we don't know anything about. . . ."

But this was too much for the others, who with roars of rage at once made for him.

"Hoy—hoy! None o' that!" And Marker was by my side, leaning over and whacking away at their fat backs with his stick. Then he turned to me, with something like a grin lighting up his long, melancholy face. "They won't leave that poor little runt alone. Always the same."

"Always the same," I agreed, companionably.

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Christopher Hollis

Catholicism, Communism, and Liberalism

THE Catholic must expect himself to be faced, from time to time, with the complaint that Catholicism and Communism are only rival totalitarianisms and that there is nothing to choose between them; and the charge demands a considered reply.

The common reply of the Catholic in a liberal society is the angry assertion that Catholics are wholly tolerant, and that it is an absurdity and a libel to suggest that there is even a possibility that in a Catholic society there would be tyrannies and atrocities at all comparable to those of a Communist society. The second part of this reply is certainly true as far as it goes. Beyond all question, the anti-religious societies of recent years have killed and tortured on a scale to which the excesses of the Inquisition at its worst bear no comparison. Obviously they have succeeded in imposing a control over thought and private life that the Church in its most jealous periods has never attempted. Dr. Micklem's statement, in his recent pamphlet on *The Pope's Men*, that there is more religious freedom in Marxist countries than in Catholic countries except Ireland and Austria, is a perverse and surprising exaggeration.

Yet the reply, though true enough as far as it goes, cannot be wholly satisfactory either to the Catholic apologist or to his liberal critic. It cannot be wholly satisfactory, the liberal may fairly object, because it only proves that the Communist is further removed from liberalism than the Catholic at the expense of the admission that the Catholic is himself some way removed. It may be true that the Catholic persecutes and interferes with freedom far less than the Communist. But can it be honestly said that he does not interfere at all? And, if he does interfere, why does he interfere? asks the liberal. And, if he interferes, can the liberal then be expected to say more than that Catholicism is the lesser evil?

LET us try to face the facts quite honestly. The Catholic Church, in distinction to Communism or any of the other movements of the day, has behind it a history of two thousand years. It has found, and finds, its followers in every quarter of the earth, among men and women of every race or culture or class, living under every sort of government. Therefore it is naturally easy enough for the partial historian, whether from the one side or the other, to find in history and experience examples of every imaginable vice and every imaginable virtue, practised by Catholics, and, if he be so foolishly minded, to parade forth those vices or these virtues as the marks of the Catholic way of life. Catholics are entitled impatiently to protest when their antagonists quote, for instance, certain habits of repression that were quite unknown save during a comparatively brief period from the 13th to the 17th centuries, and which were brought into existence by a twin threat to Catholic society of Mahomedan invasion from without and disruption by strange Eastern heresies within, and present them as if they were an inevitable consequence of Catholic predominance. And Catholics, if they protest when such weapons are used against them, are equally at fault if

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they use such weapons against their antagonists. When every excuse and explanation have been given, it remains incredible that good men should have persuaded themselves that they were acting in the spirit of Christ in using the procedure of the Inquisition; and, although the notion of maintaining a wholly Catholic society was an intelligible product of particular circumstances which have now quite perished and are not likely to return, the story must always remain to every Catholic as an awful warning of the dangers that are attached to the possession of truth.

But what is the liberal fairly entitled to say of the influence of Catholicism in the modern world? Is Catholicism for freedom or against freedom, as he understands it? It is obviously somewhat idle for the Catholic to reply, "Of course we stand for freedom, but by freedom we do not mean those very undesirable freedoms of which you speak. Such freedoms we consider to be destructive of society. We speak only of true freedom." The Catholic may, of course, be right, but such an answer quite obviously begs the question in this argument. The question whether or not the freedoms, which the liberal values, flourish in a Catholic society is precisely the question at issue. Freedom means the freedom to differ, not the freedom to conform.

It cannot be seriously or honestly denied that some of these liberal freedoms do not flourish in a Catholic society. The liberal will find it there less easy to be divorced. He is likely to find it less easy to get hold of all the literature which he wants to read. It cannot be denied that, wherever the Catholics are in force in modern democratic society, they tend —whether it be in Quebec, Massachusetts, Italy, or Holland, or where you will—to form bloc votes which are cast in such a way as to safeguard what seem to them to be certain essential rights. One may well be concerned at the recent strange decision of the Dutch hierarchy that the Dutch Catholics, though they may sit in governmental coalition with the Dutch Socialists, yet may not on pain of denial of the sacraments read Socialist newspapers. Nor can it be fairly denied that in almost all such countries instances can be found where the Catholic vote has been cast not merely to defend Catholic rights, but to prevent non-Catholics from doing things which Catholics do not think that they should do, but which those non-Catholics themselves think to be innocent; nor again that the Catholic power has sometimes been used for no higher purpose than to obtain jobs for Catholics and to exclude non-Catholics from them. I do not know that there is any reason to think that the leaders of Catholic political parties are in general any worse than other politicians, but it would be difficult to make out a case for it that they were in general any better. It is no obligatory part of the Catholic faith to admire Senator McCarthy. There are many Catholics (of whom I am happy to be one) who greatly dislike him and are strongly opposed to him. But it is not an unreasonable opinion that it has been easier for him to attain his power because, as a Catholic, he has been able to appeal to his co-religionists and because some of them have misguidedly supported that appeal simply because he is a co-religionist.

The degree of Catholic pressure and Catholic intolerance is often absurdly exaggerated by its fanatical opponents. While there are Catholics who behave in these ways, there are millions of Catholics who are most careful not to behave thus. Nor of course are the Catholics the only people who organise themselves into pressure groups. There are plenty of other such groups, both religious and secular. Catholic pressure groups are evil not so much because Catholics are evil but because pressure groups are evil. Yet these facts are some of the facts. To what purpose is it to deny them simply because Mr. Paul Blanshard, in his books, exaggerates them? The non-Catholic in a Catholic society—even the most unfortunate of them such as, for instance, a Spanish Protestant—certainly fares a great deal better than the deviationist in a Communist society. Cardinal Segurz's denunciation of one Spanish Government for not 'punishing' Protestants sufficiently are intolerable to Christian ears, but at least they indicate that things might be worse for the Protestants than they are. As certainly life is likely to be slightly less comfortable for him than it would be in a non-Catholic

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society. It is, as an Irish Protestant once fairly said, like having to wear some false teeth that do not quite fit, and that is about as far as we can carry the argument on that plane.

What more is there to say?

UNDOUBTEDLY the private mind of many a Western liberal runs somewhat like this: "At the moment," he says, "the danger from Catholicism is certainly less than the danger from Communism. It is Communism which immediately threatens us and, in so far as Catholicism is in many ways Communism's most effective opponent, we do well to co-operate with it and support it. But let us do so without illusions. Catholicism is not a great danger only because there is little immediate prospect that it will conquer the world. Should it do so, it, too, would be a great danger with which no liberal could compromise."

I can only answer, as a loyal Catholic, that I, too, would fear a wholly predominant Church. Power corrupts and the possession of truth is no guarantee against corruption. There is no body of men which is for a moment to be trusted with the appalling responsibility of unlimited power. I have no reason to think that the Catholic hierarchy would misuse that power more than the officials of the United Nations or the Communist International or the nuclear physicists or even the masters of the Liberal International, if some turn of events should leave any such bodies the emperors of the world. Indeed, an omnipotent Catholic Church would certainly be in practice a lesser danger to liberty than either an omnipotent secular state or an omnipotent Protestant body, deriving its authority from the private judgement of its leaders. For a moral code, which, whether it was originally of divine origin or not, is at any rate unchanging and traditional, is a certain guarantee against arbitrary tyranny, as is also the obligation of examination of conscience and of confession imposed upon the wielder of authority. A rule of tradition at least enables the subject to know where he is. He is better off than the servant of the party line which bewilderingly alters black into white from day to day. The field within which the Church claims authority—the field of revelation—is rigidly limited by the Church's own definition. It not only permits but proclaims man's freedom. "There is," as Pope Pius XII has said, "a political, civil and social tolerance which in such circumstances is a moral duty for Catholics also."

Yet I have no doubt that, if they were universal masters, the leaders of the Church would misuse power, as all wielders of power, lay or ecclesiastical, have always misused it. But the danger is infinitely unreal and hypothetical. Obviously with the turn of a few quite plausible events, it is indeed, if improbable, at least quite possible that Communism might make itself the master of at least Europe and Asia within the next few years. For the Communists are only concerned to impose themselves by force. They have much force, and divisions or failures among their opponents would give them their opportunity. But Catholicism, by its nature, makes its converts through individuals who voluntarily accept its discipline. Therefore we can certainly say that, barring some miraculous supernatural intervention, there is no conceivable possibility that in any foreseeable future Catholicism will succeed in imposing itself as a universal religion on all men in Western Europe, let alone in the whole world. The liberal can take what comfort he may from this reflection.

YET there is surely more to it than that. It is often assumed that it is at any rate the ambition of the Catholic to impose his religion on all men. Now it is perfectly true that the Catholic religion is of its nature a missionary religion—that the Catholic sees it as his duty to offer it, to preach it, to all nations; and it is also true that, in so far as he thinks it true, he believes that truth will be universally manifest, recognised and accepted in the new dispensation after the Second Coming when all things are made plain. The Catholic, like all other Christians, must pray Thy Kingdom Come. The Pope, in that he claims to be the Vicar of Christ and in that he claims that Christ died for all men, must as a matter of logic make his claim, in a manner of speaking, to universal dominion. But he does not expect that claim to be recognised except in so far as it is

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recognised voluntarily. For Catholicism to be accepted in this dispensation there is required a gift of faith which, according to Catholic teaching, God grants or withholds at His own mysterious Will.

The Gospel offers no sort of expectation to the Catholic or to the Christian that his faith will be universally accepted. On the contrary, the faithful are always spoken of as if they must expect to be a small and despised minority—a voice crying in the wilderness, a light shining in the darkness. It is the wholly Catholic society, wherever it has been found to exist, which is the abnormality. The natural condition of the Catholic is to find himself one of a small minority, surrounded by non-Catholics and fitting into that non-Catholic society as best he can. "It is not the office of the Church to include and in a manner embrace, like a gigantic world empire, all human society. This concept of the Church as earthly Empire and worldly domination is fundamentally false," said Pius XII in his address to the new Cardinals on February 20th, 1946.

Nor is it other than a travesty of Catholic teaching to think that the Catholic sees his non-Catholic fellow-citizens as people who are simply in error—as people, who, having failed to perceive the purpose of life, are living a merely purposeless existence. He does not think of them as the Communist must think of his opponent when the moment is ripe for a further step forward on the road to Communism: as a mere obstacle to progress—an obstacle to be liquidated. On the contrary, to the Catholic all creation is good. The heretic was created for a purpose. The gift of faith was withheld from him for a purpose. He will be judged according to how he fulfills that purpose which God set him—not merely condemned for failing to accept doctrines which God did not see fit to give him the grace to accept. Those who have been offered the faith and have rejected it, knowing it to be true, for some purely worldly advantage, are indeed on Catholic teaching in as parlous a state as it is possible to imagine. But to the heretic in good faith—in what a somewhat aggressive-sounding technical phrase calls "invincible ignorance": *facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*—so far from such persons having no service to render to Catholic truth, they have, whether they recognise it or not, the all-important service of keeping the Catholics up to the mark, of saving them from that degeneration which, human nature being what it is, would be inevitable if their religion was a monopoly. We have no right to be "at ease in Zion," and heretics, St. Augustine tells us, "*plurimum prosunt . . . ad verum aperiendum spirituales catholicos excitando*"—"are of great value in exciting the spiritual catholics to understand the truth." Pius XII on his accession offered his first expression of gratitude to "those who, though not belonging to the visible body of the Catholic Church, have given noble and sincere expression to their appreciation of all that unites them to us in love for the person of Christ or in belief in God."

The notion, therefore, that a resistance to Communism in which Catholics played a notable part might be for the liberal a mere exchange of frying-pan for fire—of one totalitarianism for another—is, I think that we can fairly say, false and unreal, built out of superficial analogies. With the possible exceptions of Southern Ireland and Quebec, there are not in the modern world any such bodies as wholly Catholic societies in the sense of societies in which anything approximating to the total population believes and practices the Catholic religion; nor, however the ebb and flow of opinion may go, is there any likelihood that any such societies will come into existence anywhere in the world in any foreseeable future.

But then the liberal, if he has followed me so far, is entitled to deploy the exactly opposite argument. "If that is all that Catholicism is," he may say, "then what is the point of it?—at any rate on this political field with which we are at the moment concerned? You, as a Catholic, believe certain things about past, present, and future intervention of forces from another world into the affairs of this world which seem to me highly improbable. You wish to maintain certain ritual observances which I find ridiculous but which, so long as you keep them to yourself, are comparatively harmless. Your demographic teaching

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would doubtless bring war, disease, and famine to the world, were the whole world to obey it, but there is little chance that the world will do so. Indeed, it is more probable that the Catholics, whether forbidden or not, will find means of limiting their families, just as they found means of practising usury when by the 17th century not to practise it had become manifestly altogether too inconvenient. It is much more probable that the Catholics will limit their families than that they will impose their reckless doctrines of non-limitation on others. If that be so, well and good. We will leave you alone to your uninteresting practices, but you cannot pretend that you are an important factor in the battle. The liberals must face Communism and conquer it, relying only on their own strength."

There is an apparent coherence in this argument which we must fairly face. But the Catholic is, I think, entitled to complain that the liberal is a difficult antagonist with whom to argue because his philosophy is so desperately negative. He who believes that man has a destiny has a right to claim that he should have freedom within which to fulfill his destiny. But, if we know nothing of that destiny, if there be no certain values, then how can it greatly matter whether he is free or not? How can it greatly matter what he does? The assertion that the government should interfere as little as possible cannot by itself be a philosophy, because we want to know what man is supposed to do with his freedom when he has got it. *Fais que voudras* cannot by itself be a sufficient maxim, for what are we to say of those men and women—certainly a high proportion and, it may well be, a majority—who would prefer to be directed and told what to do? The doctrinaire liberal is a man who is continually shooting at another's goal but has no goal of his own. He may score once or twice, but there can be no real match without goals to shoot at at both ends.

To that extent the Communist and the Catholic, each claiming to possess an explanation of the purpose of life, are like one another and unlike the liberal. How far is it fair to deduce from that that the two movements are but two rival totalitarianisms, differing in details but essentially of a kind? Clearly it is not possible to compare them without considering in detail their claims—challenging their title-deeds—asking on the one hand whether Marx's theory of history is correct and whether it is logical to expect that the conclusions that he prophesies will emerge from it—asking on the other hand whether the Catholic proofs for the existence of God are valid, whether history supports the Catholic's account of the foundation and continuance of his Church, I do not think that it would be very difficult to show that of these two arguments the Catholic is the more scientific and logical, but that is not the purpose of this article. Its purpose is rather to underline a number of respects in which the two claims, whether either or both be false, are in any event not of a kind.

THE first important difference surely is that to the Communist it is society which is the unit of salvation—to the Catholic it is the individual. The Communist argues that certain changes must and will take place and that then we shall have a Utopian society—a society in which pre-history ends and history begins—in which the state will wither away. One might pause to ask—and ask without much hope of getting a coherent answer—what these absurd phrases mean. One might quote such sayings as those of Lenin that "it would not matter a jot if three-quarters of the human race perished; the important thing was that the remaining quarter should be Communist"—and argue from it that Communism's indifference to the individual is of a somewhat crude and bloody nature, but it is not my purpose at the moment to give an emotive colouring to the argument. My concern is with the statement of a fact—a fact that a Communist himself would not deny—that Communism is concerned with the transformation of society. But the Catholic—or indeed the Christian of any sort—is not concerned with the transformation of society as an end. Obviously if more people became Christians—and what is more, good Christians—that would be bound to have certain consequences and the Church has been careful—particularly in the last seventy years since Leo XIII's accession—to set out in some

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detail what is her social teaching, to set out her theory of widely distributed property in opposition to the socialist and capitalist theories of its concentration. But this is to her only a secondary matter. To the Christian, the duty to his neighbour cannot be other than a derivative from the duty to God. This life is primarily a testing-place for the judgement of the next, and it is of no matter to the test what are the social conditions under which it takes place.

Indeed, so far from it being the object of policy to raise the standard of living—as capitalists, liberals, and Communists, however much they may differ on means, generally agree that it is—the Catholic and the Christian, if he heeds the teaching of the New Testament, must think that it is a very dangerous thing to be rich and a very blessed thing to be poor. Christianity teaches, certainly, that man has his needs, that he cannot be expected to lead the good life unless he first has the material means which make it possible for him to live at all. But Christianity's assertion that material needs must be first satisfied in order that spiritual problems can be solved afterwards is very different from the claim of either Communism or capitalism that the purpose of policy is to give the people as high a material standard of living as possible. To Christianity, a law of diminishing returns, or rather of no returns at all, very quickly sets in. A man with a dinner is better than a man with no dinner, but it does not from that follow that a man with three motor-cars is better than a man with two motor-cars—or even that a society in which all men have three motor-cars is better than a society in which all men have two motor-cars. Other things being equal, it is worse. The superabundance has merely multiplied desires.

So the first great difference between the theory of Communism and the theory of Catholicism is that to the Catholic economic arrangements, important as they may be, are nevertheless of secondary importance. In the same way, to the Catholic, political arrangements are of secondary importance. Its critics accuse Catholicism of hostility to democracy. I do not think that the accusation is particularly true either of the theory of Catholicism—consider, for instance, Suarez—or of its practice. Where Catholics have come in contact with democratic institutions, they have worked with them as comfortably as with other forms of government, but what is of course true is that Catholics tend to find the religious worship of democracy as the sole moral form of government a trifle ridiculous. The Church has seen all forms of secular government rise and fall. Like Plato, Catholics tend to think that the forms go round in a circle and, like Aristotle, that the best constitution is a mixed constitution. With Alexander Pope they ask what is administered best, and with Samuel Johnson would not give much to live under one form rather than another. In any event, again, it is all of real but of secondary importance. Order is necessary for the good life, but order is not itself the good life. Religion does not exist, as Napoleon III thought, for the sake of order. It is rather order which exists for the sake of religion. It is the belief that politics are all-important and all-competent—that the solutions of the problems are to be found in politics—which is itself the great heresy.

"Yes, but," the liberal may say, "all these distinctions are from my point of view distinctions of words. The Catholic may not care about politics, but it all depends on what he calls politics. He does not care about the state's politics, but that is only because, like the Communist, he gives but a limited allegiance to any state but his own. He cares intensely about his own politics. He is content enough to see the rise and fall of secular governments. Their instability but sharpens the contrast with the unchanging Papacy—makes it all the easier for the Catholic to claim his Church as a unique possession."

Obviously the sense in which the Communist and the sense in which the Catholic give only a limited allegiance to the state are very different. The Communist gives indeed a very limited allegiance to a non-Communist state but he gives an absolute allegiance to the Communist state. But the Catholic gives a limited allegiance to the state as such. The distinctive contribution of the Christian Church to political philosophy is the teaching that there

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are two authorities—that both the Church and the state have real authority, each in its own sphere. In this the Christian society differs alike from all pre-Christian and all post-Christian societies, liberal or totalitarian. In the course of Christian history, Catholic and Protestant, there has, it is true, been here and there a prophet of extravagance who has sought to exaggerate the one authority over the other—a Gregory IX to exaggerate the Church over the state and a Luther or a Filmer to exaggerate the state over the Church—but the central tradition has been to assert the reality of both authorities and to claim that the maintenance of the two authorities is the condition of liberty. Of course, it is a liberty for which a price has to be paid. If both authorities are real, then, however clearly their spheres may be defined, it is inevitable, human nature being what it is, that there will on occasions be conflict between them. Such conflicts have happened from time to time in all ages. Today we can collect stories of ill-treatment of Catholics, say, in Northern Ireland or in the Southern States of America, of ill-treatment by Catholics in Colombia or in Spain. Let us all by all means investigate such grievances and do what we can to remedy them. But these stories, to whatever they may amount, are trivial things in comparison with the gigantic conflict with which all civilisation is threatened and it would be a tragic blunder to see them beyond proportion.

THE liberal may well ask what would be the effect of an increase in Catholic strength on art. Here again, just as it is an unreal and meaningless abstraction to ask what would be the political and social consequences if all the world should become Catholic, so it is equally an unreal and meaningless abstraction to ask what would be the artistic consequences. It is a hypothesis so improbable that one might as well ask whether, if we were all turned into horses, we should all wish to run in the Derby. It is indeed certainly true that much of the art that Catholicism inspires—"the art of St. Sulpice," as they call it—is very bad art and that of the Catholic contribution to good art the least part comes from such wholly Catholic countries as Quebec and Southern Ireland. Catholics, like other people, need the stimulus of contradiction and competition to produce of their best. A censorship which tells the faithful what cannot be accepted as Catholic doctrine is a not unreasonable instrument. A censorship which invokes the police to prevent all citizens, faithful or unfaithful, from reading certain books is another matter.

The real question is not: would a Catholic society produce good art?—which is meaningless—but: is art the more likely to flourish, whether among Catholics or non-Catholics, in a society to which the Catholic idea is familiar? Obviously one can only answer the question if one knows what is the alternative society against which we are to set this society. A mere absence of the Catholic ideas is not in itself an idea. The totalitarian atmosphere, in which the reality of the individual is denied, cannot be favourable to art, for it allows to art no autonomy. In its philosophy, art exists only to serve the purpose of policy—only as propaganda. On the other hand, art is not likely to be healthy in a society in which a mere æstheticism of art for art's sake is the fashion. In the first place it is unlikely that more than a small coterie will profess such a philosophy and they will inevitably tend to separate themselves off from the rest of society, to the loss both of themselves and of society. In the second place the phrase "art for art's sake" is strictly meaningless. Art cannot have a sake. Only a person can have a sake, and if the artist does not recognise a vocation to serve the greater glory of God, then he produces only for his own satisfaction, and it is almost inevitable then that, when novelty in achievement has worn off and applause has been dulled by familiarity, boredom will set in and he will no longer trouble to excel. Art, after all, is concerned with the individual and the particular. If all that matter are social trends, art is certain to wither because any particular action of any particular individual has so infinitely small and uncertain an influence on the sum of things that it is hard to be excited by it; but, if sin is a reality, then the destiny of an immortal soul is at stake in every incident and all is significant.

It is not necessary, it is true, to be a Catholic

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or even to be a Christian in order to believe in this significance. It is only necessary not to be a totalitarian. But the Christian framework is, as a matter of history, the framework within which this reality of the moral choice is most familiarly presented to European man. So long as that framework is present as a live option, whether it be accepted by a particular artist or whether it be rejected and allowed merely to act as a pacemaker, to stimulate opposition and the statement of the alternative, there is a greater chance of life being lived at the tension which is necessary for great art and less risk of that collapse into *accidie* which is its death. It is evident in the modern world that, though only a minority, it may be, is prepared to accept or to practice the Christian religion, a very large number likes it to form the stuff of its drama or its novels and would find a literature in which religion played no part intolerably boring and insignificant.

THE liberal society held up—and holds up—for admiration certain natural virtues. As a matter of historical fact, European society was taught those virtues by the Christian Church. The secularist may say that they are natural virtues—that the fact that the Church taught them was no proof that it was a divine society—that the ethical teaching of the Christian Church, in so far as it was sensible, did not differ greatly from that of Confucius or the great Greeks—that all that Christianity did was to add to plain common sense a few extravagant paradoxes to which in fact the vast majority of Christians have never paid more than lip service and to invent a system of future rewards and punishments for which there is no evidence. I naturally would not accept such criticisms as just, but for the immediate purpose it is irrelevant whether they are just or not. The only point at the moment is that as a matter of history Europeans have derived their ethical teaching from the Church and that the heresy which the heretic has sought to substitute for it has been an exaggeration of one element in the balance of the Catholic teaching at the expense of its counterpart.

What does the mere archæology of historical origin matter, the liberal may ask? And, indeed, in the world up to 1914 it was widely believed that progress was simply one of the facts of life, that man had outgrown his savage habits in much the same way that he had outgrown his tail, and that, whatever the future might hold, there could be no more a question of returning to the moral habits of the past than there was of returning to its material conditions. Progress was like the steam-engine, and could no more be uninvented than the steam-engine. I myself went to my first private school for a year or two before the 1914 war and can therefore as a very young boy just remember those years. I can remember how we read there Dumas's *Three Musketeers* and how the master explained to us in commentary that torture, religious persecution, imprisonment without trial were features of a barbaric past which had now wholly perished. Whatever the future might hold, there could be no question of these things ever coming back again into European life. If I had suggested that, before I had lived out half a lifetime, they would have come back, and on a scale greater than ever before known in history, I should have been caned as a maniac.

Today, grim experience has taught us how unbelievably naïve was that Rousseauan faith that it was only necessary to get rid of authority and institutions and that all men would then be naturally good. Whatever other dogmas of the Christian religion may be false, original sin at least is true. Marx's main fault was not in his economic analysis but, as Bakunin pointed out, in his absurd expectation that those to whom power was entrusted under the new dispensation would not be corrupted by it as the wielders of power were corrupted under the old dispensation. Liberalism, it has been found, is not a strong enough or positive enough philosophy to stand alone against the barbarian attack. The man who has no standards outside himself to which to appeal is too easily frightened and too easily misled by fashion. *La démocratie est une chose beaucoup trop sérieuse pour qu'on la laisse aux politiques*, and *la trahison des clercs* is writ too large over history for us to entrust the defence of the intellect solely to intellectuals. A society only possesses

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the self-confidence to defend itself in adversity if it contains within it at least a core of those who believe, rightly or wrongly, that that for which they stand comes from beyond this world and that the destiny of an immortal soul is staked upon their fortitude. Even if the liberal thinks that these claims are false, he must at least, if he is fair-minded, admit that it is a great practical advantage in this world, with its intolerable instability of opinion, that there should be somebody who holds by a faith that is at least traditional and that does not change from day to day in what it proclaims to be right and wrong. The superiority of the Catholic over the Protestant for this purpose derives not from any claim that the Catholic has the better of an argument about authority or justification by faith but from the fact that it is possible to know what the Catholic will say, whereas the Protestant in these days may protest anything.

THE field of political tactics is not a field upon which any claim of infallibility can be put forward. There mistakes have doubtless been made and more mistakes will be made in the future. Yet on the whole the record of religion as the opponent of totalitarianism in the modern world has been far better than the record of any other force. The very secular and impartial verdict of the British Control Commission on Nazi Germany records:

> The fact remains that both denominations (Catholic and Protestant) were the chief centres of opposition to National Socialism. They were far more courageous than the trades unions, the universities, the intellectuals and the army in their determination to uphold truth, justice and righteousness.

Behind the Iron Curtain, in more recent years, Orthodox Christianity has indeed, in accordance with its tradition, made its terms with the secular power, but the only effective resistance to totalitarianism has come from religions—predominantly from the Catholics as the only religious body other than the Orthodox present in those countries in any numbers, but also from Protestants when, like the Bulgarian Baptists, they are found there. "Of all the spiritual forces in the Danube basin the Catholic faith alone mustered the strength and courage to resist the inroads of Communism into human liberty," writes the non-Catholic Mr. Gordon Shepherd in the latest study of *Russia's Danubian Empire*.

So in summary we may say this. The Christian religion is primarily concerned with men's private affairs; and only secondarily and consequentially with their public affairs. It is indeed a protest against the primacy of politics. Yet in this essay it has only been with its secondary political consequences that we have been concerned. Nor again have we been concerned with the all-important question whether its claims are true. I myself—it is only fair once more to make clear—happen to think them true, but it is not my concern to argue that thesis here. My concern is with the very much more limited proposition that a strong Catholic body is necessary if either Communism is to be successfully resisted or liberalism successfully revived. The danger of a Catholic predominance is an unreal danger. In the real world liberalism needs a strong Catholicism for its well-being and Catholicism needs a strong liberalism to save it from itself. The Catholics need the liberals to keep them up to the mark—the "heretics" to excite them to truth. The liberals need the Catholics because experience has shown that few men can remain faithful to their principles unless they at least believe that those principles come to them with a sanction from beyond this world. Man-made ethics are too erratic and undependable. The Catholic Church is at the least the citadel within which the men of a free world can take refuge in the hour of siege. To the Catholic it is much more than that, but to the liberal, anxious to roam abroad when times are easy, it is that at least.

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Comment

Style in Politics

POLITICS, as we in Europe have come to know, is neither a rational nor a scientific affair. Just because of this irrationality of politics, different countries have developed what can only be described as different styles of political behaviour and of political talk. When persons from one national political environment are brought face to face with those from another, they find these contrasting styles a serious barrier to mutual comprehension.

This problem of communicating one's own sense of correct political behaviour, of describing that of one's own country, was very much to the fore at the "Round Table" on "Teaching and Research in Comparative Government" that met at Florence in the spring of this year under the chairmanship of Professor W. A. Robson of the London School of Economics, and under the auspices of IPSA (The International Political Science Association), one of Unesco's happier progeny. Certainly the phrase "political scientist"—which presumably describes someone professionally qualified for precisely this task of communication—acquired an ever hollower ring as the conference went on. If we imagine the shade of Machiavelli as still haunting the great hall of the Palazzo Vecchio where the conference held its opening session, we might well also imagine him asking whether over four centuries more of reflection and study had in fact brought us any nearer to a proper understanding of the scope and nature of political activity.

Political science is relatively new as an academic discipline in Italy, and the occasion marked a new stage in the coming together of Italian and foreign scholars in a field particularly affected by the vicissitudes of recent decades. The fact that the meeting was not fully representative was perhaps an advantage. The United States, France, and Great Britain provided the largest visiting delegations, and one or two scholars came from Germany, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, Israel, India, and Japan respectively. Since the Indian delegate, Professor S. V. Kokegar of Poona, from whom we learned a great deal, spoke in very British accents, and since the Japanese delegate took little active part in the Conference, it was the North Atlantic nucleus that was really engaged. And it was this that made the difficulties which were encountered so revealing.

How little agreement there seemed to be! How much evidence of national touchiness! How radically different the fundamental approaches of academic persons representing countries which, by origin or adoption, fall so clearly within the mainstream of the Western democratic tradition!

PARTLY, of course, it was language in the simplest sense of the word that was at the root of many of the Conference's difficulties. When the interpreter enters, so does the orator. A purely academic body like the IPSA cannot ordinarily afford the apparatus of simultaneous translation that is lavished on the doubtfully deserving proceedings of proper international conferences. So, when asked for, English had to be done into French, and French into English —not, I hasten to add, for the benefit of the nationals of those allegedly insular nations, but for the Americans primarily on the one hand, and the Italians on the other. One felt at moments that what was needed most urgently was simply an improved method of teaching

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foreign languages, and the willingness to use it. Occasionally words themselves provided the material for direct argument: an Anglo-French controversy was roused by the determination of the English to restrict the use of the word "federal" to its classical connotation and not to use it loosely for such things as the Commonwealth.

The language problem complicated the revelation of the fundamental divergences. On some of the relatively limited and concrete subjects—parliamentary procedures, nationalised industries, electoral systems—a genuine interchange of views did take place. (Unfortunately, the Italian author of the paper on the last of these—it took the form of an elaborate piece of special pleading for the current Italian electoral law—did not turn up to find out what his academic colleagues from other countries made of it.) Political parties—a subject in itself of consuming dullness as far as I am concerned, but one which has an overwhelming, not to say morbid, fascination for the present generation of political scientists—duly received its tribute of a session, and of a paper from Maurice Duverger of Bordeaux, the Ostrogorski of our times. These were skirmishes.

More excitement was aroused by an attempt to deal comparatively with the method by which the foreign policy of different countries is subject in varying degrees to democratic control. Echoes of not irrelevant discussions in the House of Commons, Congress, and the French Assembly reached the conference only faintly—Florence was an engulfing and hospitable island, where the immediate could be put out of mind—but the interchange revealed the acute sensitiveness of Americans to possible misunderstandings about their own procedures. When a British speaker argued that the volume of support for the Bricker amendment proved the depth of American suspicions of the executive power, Professor Charles Aikin of California retorted that, on the contrary, the rejection of the amendment showed the fidelity of the Americans to workable constitutional procedures.

THE main clash, however, took quite a different form. Through what was really almost an accident, the Conference got itself launched at an early stage into the discussion of a highly abstruse report, dressed up in a formidable "sociological" vocabulary, on "Research in Comparative Politics" drawn up by a group of young American scholars—three of whom were present—and published in the United States a few months previously. Rightly or wrongly, many people took the view that this report, and the paper presented at the Conference by one of its authors, Professor Roy C. Macridis of Northwestern University, amounted to an attempt to turn political studies into an exact inductive science with rigidly prescribed methods, and one capable of propounding generally valid solutions to all political problems. It was suggested that its authors —and perhaps therefore American political scientists generally—were contemptuous of all that had been done before them, and in particular of both the ethical and the historical approaches that have coloured the bulk of European political writing in the past. By reaction against what seemed to be an attempt to confine their studies within the limit of a fixed programme, the European members of the conference found themselves pleading for pure empiricism, or for politics as an art, and finding some sympathy from senior American scholars such as Carl J. Friedrich of Harvard.

The whole thing seemed a little paradoxical. As one Frenchman pointed out, twenty years ago it was the Americans who were all for collecting data and the Europeans who wanted to generalise; now it appeared to be the reverse. Looking back, one feels this was not quite the case; most of the Europeans for whom political science is so often a mere branch of legal studies were still disposed to think in terms of principles of general validity, and to upbraid the true empiricists as super-journalists, or super-super-journalists as Professor Pinto of Lille put it, to spare any hurt feelings.

As these discussions proceeded, and as it became possible to set these differences against a concrete background of university studies—so different in the different countries: and here we have another problem!—they seemed a little less formidable in fact than they had in first appearance. It does make a difference that the French, Italian, and Scandinavian study of politics should be carried on in faculties of law, that the Americans should feel a certain kinship with, or possibly a sense of inferiority towards their brethren in economics and sociology, and that the British students of politics should so often find their work merging with that of

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historians. One suspects that underneath it all was an unconscious fear that the Americans, who dictate our fate in the practical world, might be trying to give us an ideology to sweeten the pill. They weren't trying to do any such thing, of course; but the fear was symptomatic.

PERHAPS it was from the French side that this sentiment was most apparent; the French delegation was a particularly strong one. In addition to those mentioned, they had the Director of the Institut d'Études Politiques, Professor Jacques Chapsal, and an eminent constitutional authority in Professor G. Vedel. The French university structure and the French intellectual outlook have both been modified since the war, but the modifications have been held sternly within a strong national intellectual tradition. In some ways this is an undoubted advantage; there are no loose ends. Distinctions are made and not lightly abandoned; government is one thing—a matter for lawyers; politics is another—an affair for historians and geographers and sociologists. The first deals with institutions, the other with the more subtle field of attitude and particularly with the families of opinions that make up the French political landscape. Outside the whole conpectus are foreign countries with their curious and untidy political patterns which the French try to understand and reduce to order, and to bring within the framework of the familiar. The idea that there can be more than one framework, that French ideas are not all-sufficient, that alternative schemes, making distinctions of quite different kinds, are permissible and indeed indispensable—this is something they are not prepared to take on trust.

The Americans provide a contrast at every turn with the French, as with the Italians. Their students of politics seem to have been everywhere and to have seen everything; they know nothing of the rigid hierarchy of the French academic system. The immense resources at their disposal mean that any subject can be investigated and any required data collected. From this they hope to produce solutions to problems and to produce them within measurable time; the problems themselves they regard as self-evident. They are limited only (though seriously) by the prejudices of the moment. An American professor gave an excellent talk at Florence on the study of political phenomena in the Far East: the talk did not mention Communist China.

The Frenchman cannot see that the problems are self-evident. He feels that for the Americans the only question is: why is not this more like America? Or, worse, what can we do to make it more like? Of course, this is untrue and unfair; but we think on these subjects in caricature only.

AND then there is the problem of the German approach to politics. After all, to the French, and to other West Europeans, this matters most of all. On this matter, Florence was not a good point for observation. Germany had only two representatives, both clearly familiar with the American academic atmosphere and prepared to talk in American terms. When the Fascist mask was stripped from Italy, one was back in the immemorial world of Mediterranean politics, of clashing ideas and groups, the kind of thing that has formed the staple of political observation ever since Thucydides and Aristotle. But if the Germans are not Nazis, what are they? They are, it seems, pragmatists of the American kind, asking the fashionable questions of the moment. After all, the whole American university apparatus with its focus on the doctorate was taken over wholesale from Germany. It has powerfully overlaid the originally English intellectual foundations of America; it is still a clue to what goes on in American and German academic minds.

The British, it is well known, do not shine at international conferences of this kind. The parsimony of their treasury and the poverty of their own academic institutions tend to make their representation a haphazard affair; though on this occasion we were fortunate in having as well as Professor Robson, Mr. D. N. Chester, the Warden-elect of Nuffield College to represent the Oxford "school." So far, however, from speaking from any national school of thought, the British members aired their own major differences of principle before the eyes of astonished foreigners. Professor S. E. Finer somewhat confounded those unfamiliar with British academic controversies by launching into a sustained attack on the teaching of the history of political theory as a central subject, only to find himself sternly reproved by Professor Robson. They did not, on the other

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hand, feel the same acute sense of constraint as did the others where the Americans were concerned; for one thing, they are used to them in a way in which the French and Italians for instance are not. From the point of view of the social sciences, London long has been, and Oxford is increasingly, American. Without the Americans we would have hardly enough graduate students to justify our lectures and classes at all. Oxford in the 1950's is for the American student of politics what Paris in the 1920's was for the American student of the fine arts; except that the former brings with him a more substantial baggage; and through his eyes, even those of us who do not know America at first hand see it unfold.

For the British, then, Florence was, as far as our American colleagues were concerned, the continuation of a familiar dialogue. We found ourselves defending the modest and essentially personal scale of our own thinking, the concentration upon particularly favourite topics, the cosy parochialism and unwillingness to think in large general terms, above all our own doubt as to the possibility of adding more than an inch or two at a time to the stock of human knowledge on the shelves.

Political knowledge for the Americans is something to be processed, so that results can be registered and filed and made use of; for the British it is one more source of food for poetic reflection. The American key word is "method": the British "history." Florence seemed an appropriate place for emphasising the latter. While the conference was in session, the Soviet Ambassador was calling unexpectedly on the Mayor, who with some presence of mind showed him the original text of the Treaty of Florence of 1439 between the Western and Eastern Churches.

Max Beloff

Elizabeth Jennings

Astronomer: A Song

ASTRONOMER bring your telescope to bear
Upon this planet. Do not think that since
Everything stands and moves about you near
You have its meaning clear.
Find out some glass that probes beyond the stance
Of men perceived by their own measurements.

Useless to hunt the stars in outer space
Merely to have a superficial look
At a mere size. Your glass will but disclose
The limits of a glass.
O find a clearer, closer one to take
Deep looks into this planet or to break.

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Art

The Venice Biennale

NATIONS as well as members of illustrious families seem increasingly liable nowadays to feelings of guilt about living off the spiritual capital of their ancestors. What else can explain the following extract from a recent official advertisement designed to attract American tourists?—"Many experienced travellers report that the quality of cooking in British hotels and restaurants is now *the best in Europe*" (and the italics are not mine): not only is this unexpected amenity considered to have more drawing power than our ancient monuments and institutions, but the continuation of one of our most cherished traditions is expressly denied.

The Italians, perhaps more than anyone, seem desperately anxious to show that they are not living in or on their past but are very much alive. The realist approach in recent Italian films might well be one symptom among many of Italy's need to prove to herself and the world that she is a living force and not the beautiful ruin of past civilisations. The bustle and cacophony of Italian cities may likewise be considered a means of proving that life is going on. Milan, indeed, makes the point so effectively that one is persuaded that its ancient buildings have lately been imported there at the expense of its wealthy industrialists, anxious to give tone to the place.

Venice, however, is different. It is the only North Italian town in which one does not suffer from the delusion, provoked by the clatter of mechanical bicycles, that the streets are ceaselessly being torn asunder by pneumatic drills. Venice alone is, in auditory terms, on a human scale.

Machinery signifies urgency, and a sense of urgency is what gives us a sense of time: timelessness means nothing mystical, but simply not caring when things get done. It is its sheer remoteness from mechanical noise, not the ubiquity of its ancient buildings, that makes Venice timeless, giving the Piazza San Marco a detachment from the hour and the age not shared by, say, the equally beautiful, equally ancient, Piazza dei Signori in Vicenza. Venice is no museum, it vibrates with life. Only it is a life outside time. A few hours there, and one has become indifferent not only to when one will arrive where one is going, but also to where one is going: one begins to move in a trance, caring not at all whether one will ever come out of it. To induce this hypnosis, the absence of noise other than human noise and the soporific lapping of water conspires with the fact that Venice is a maze. If one does not try using a map to find one's way out, it is not so much that one feels this would be an insult to the spirit of the place as that one knows it will be useless: the only time I ever tried getting from one place to another in Venice with the help of a map, I found myself looking for some Tintorettos aboard a liner bound for the Ægean.

One has to accept, then, that in Venice one is perpetually lost. One acquires an Oriental acceptance of whatever may happen, an inability to formulate any intention. The future becomes meaningless, the present infinitely beautiful, the past infinitely regrettable, as, walking alone at night, one drifts on the currents of the streets, down dark narrow alleys in which one knows one will never be coshed, such is the confidence one has acquired in the benevolence of the external world. Nothing matters any more, and solitude is the only luxury one can conceive of.

And what has all this to do with the Biennale? Better ask: what has the Biennale to do with all this? Every two years, into this timeless world where nostalgia is more potent than desire, are introduced several thousand brand-new monuments to human ambition with an

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attendant train of officials, publicists, and merchants, there to decide which of them will be transformed into currency and instruments of national prestige. The present is with us, and the crowds and the gossip and the jealousies. Venice bestirr'd.

THE site of the exhibition is the Giardini Pubblici on the route from St. Mark's to the Lido—heavily scented sub-tropical gardens, all dark green and pale gravel. Here, during the last forty or fifty years, there have been erected a score of buildings for accommodating works of art during the summer season. Their architectural styles range from gilded Magyar and Holy Russian to Dutch modernistic and American colonial. The Palazzo Centrale is the centre-piece, a great bungalow of nearly fifty rooms; the others are the national pavilions, and are the actual property of the nations which display their wares in them.

How each nation fills its pavilion varies considerably. This year, the French have about thirty artists, all living, represented in two hundred exhibits, the Americans have two one-man shows of living painters and a single example apiece of three sculptors, the Germans have biggish exhibitions of two dead painters and a living sculptor and smaller selections of work by half a dozen living painters. Visitors seem to have a strong preference for seeing a fair number of works by a few artists rather than a handful apiece by many: the French pavilion has been severely criticised, both on the spot and in the press, for being excessively miscellaneous.

The Palazzo Centrale contains first of all a huge panorama of contemporary Italian art—well over a thousand works by almost two hundred and twenty painters and sculptors. Then it has a dozen rooms given over to countries not in possession of a national pavilion. Finally there are the exhibitions of foreign art arranged by or for the Biennale office—retrospectives of eminent individuals, living or dead, or surveys of movements such as impressionism, cubism, and fauvism. This year's special exhibitions are a Courbet show, organised by a Franco-Italian committee and containing some fifty paintings, several of them from America, including the *Toilette de la Mariée*, and displays of about thirty works apiece by Jean Arp, Joan Miró, and Max Ernst.

That the three artists who have been so honoured have all been connected with the surrealist movement is not fortuitous. Surrealism was selected as a theme for this year's Biennale by its central committee, the participating nations being invited to build their exhibitions around it. They have responded in varying degrees. The Greeks have given over their entire pavilion to a one-man show by a surrealist painter, Nicos Engonopoulos. The Spanish pavilion includes a group of water-colours by Dali and of coloured lithographs by Miró. One of the rooms in the French pavilion is consecrated to five exponents of "fantastic art." The Austrians and the Germans have sent works by some younger artists in the surrealist or fantastic tradition. The Belgians have conformed with high enthusiasm and thoroughness, compiling a historical survey of their national fantastic and surrealist art. There are works by Bosch, Peter Huys, Brueghel, Teniers, Wiertz, Felicien Rops, Ensor and others, a large room of Magrittes as centre-piece, a smaller room of Delvaux, and a few works by lesser contemporaries. It is the most coherent and instructive pavilion of the Biennale.

If the material was not there for other national pavilions—except perhaps the German and the Swiss—to be arranged quite on these lines, it is still a pity that no other country attempted a systematic surrealist exhibition. It is far more regrettable, however, that no surrealist exhibition on an international scale was organised in the Palazzo Centrale. The time is certainly ripe for a major survey of surrealism, laid out, preferably, in such a way as to reveal the historical development of the movement as a whole, rather than the artistic personalities of its individual exponents. One-man shows of three particular surrealists are hardly a substitute for this. Sad to say, however, we have come to expect nothing better from the Biennale. In 1950, for example, the Palazzo Centrale included exhibitions of cubism and fauvism and Italian futurism. Several major works were on view, but not one of these exhibitions could lay any claims to being comprehensive. The Biennale office—as distinct from the national pavilions—has been giving us far too many exhibitions which seem to have been carelessly and even hastily thrown together: too many tit-bits, not enough solid nourishment. On the other hand, the main purpose of the Biennale is, after all, to present a cross-section of current activity. Its

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justification lies in its topicality. So perhaps it is unjust to complain that it is not, so to speak, a history-book as well as a newspaper.

THE twenty-seventh Biennale may have failed to provide adequate data for a proper revaluation of surrealism, but it does confront us with the interesting problem of the relative value of the kind of surrealism which uses a purely descriptive pictorial language and that which employs a more abstract language.

Surrealism is not a style but an attitude of mind, one that can find expression in several different styles. It is concerned, in the broadest terms, with the revelation of unconscious fantasies as manifestations of the mystery and absurdity of life. This means in practice that its iconography consists mainly of transpositions and transformations: things appear in unexpected contexts, things undergo surprising metamorphoses. Where the surrealist uses illustrative forms, these transpositions and transformations are manifest; where he uses abstract forms, they are latent. That is to say, a Magritte or a Delvaux will represent the absurd in action: a pair of boots is depicted with toes in place of toe-caps, the circus strong man confronts us bearing dumb-bells one of the spheres of which is his own head. On the other hand, an Arp or a Miró will invent vaguely biomorphic forms which describe nothing but evoke a variety of things—a breast, a fruit, a mound of snow—which thereby become interchangeable and imply an unending process of

Formation, transformation,
Eternal mind's eternal conversation,
Wreathed with all floating forms of what may be,

to quote Goethe's words. By means of such implied or latent transformations suggested by quasi-abstract forms with an ambiguous reference to the external world, surrealism achieves its aim of proving the irrationality of reality by denying the primary law of logic, the principle of identity—a thing is what it is and not anything else.

This latter type of surrealism seems, in theory, to have every advantage over the other. The implications of its iconography are more universal. It is more likely to be a product of the imagination than of the fancy. It uses forms evolved through the interaction of unconscious fantasy with the properties of the medium, instead of realising images which might be the product of trick photography. Above all, and as a result of all this, it is capable of having a formal value denied of necessity to pictures in a style parodying that of Victorian illustrations or technicoloured advertisements in glossy magazines.

But what does this quasi-abstract surrealism amount to in practice? The Biennale provides the answer, because Miró and Arp are its most eminent and faithful exponents in painting and sculpture respectively. Miró is clearly a tremendously gifted painter, a consummate master of his means of expression, a truly original spirit, and a real charmer. But there is something terribly thin about his painted poetry. It is not merely that it is too often trivial, for he has also produced works such as *La Ferme* in which gaiety becomes portentous, and a few quasi-abstract compositions of the mid-thirties as broodingly impressive as they are elegant. Hence it is not so much his habit of being wilfully lightweight that determines Miró's limitations, but rather that whatever the character and whatever the intensity of his emotion it is always coloured by a certain quaintness. And this combines with the extreme directness and simplicity of his language to produce an effect of infantilism which, whether one believes it to be affected or genuine, must become tiresome. A painter with any claims to distinction can only afford to use so direct and primitive a language as Miró's if he has the heroic vision of a Léger.

Arp is an altogether less brilliant artist than Miró, but he reveals a refined sensibility in work which has the conviction that belongs to any art that springs from a deeply felt obsession. Springs? Hardly: oozes would be more precise. And that's the trouble. The obsession is there, and a certain subtlety in communicating it. But no vitality or intensity: there is something fatally tired and lax about these serpentine anatomical doodles in the round, an absence of tautness which makes them rather boring, mildly disgusting. Yes, women are curvaceous creatures, and their breasts and behinds are like cumulus clouds. Does it matter?

DELVAUX'S women are more like waxworks: it is a less pious notion, but its implications are more intriguing. Frigid as film-stars, they parade before us showing us everything, offer-

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ing nothing, rapt in a narcissistic daydream. In the painting (here reproduced) which, like a cubist collage, takes its name from the newspaper in the corner, *La Voix Publique*, and in the background of which is a *voie publique* with a tramway, there reclines a descendant of Manet's Olympia who is, however, no *fille publique*, since she does not await an expected guest, but, glazed of eye, has allowed her fingers to stray to the symbolic pleat in the drapery over her thigh, while behind her are three familiars, dressed like Victorian governesses, the huge bows in whose hair provide them with the wings of ministering angels or Eumenides. It may not be art, but it has an authentic nostalgia —nostalgia for the secret longings below the surface of Victorian propriety, and then nostalgia for boyhood hours spent with one's eye at the keyhole of a sister's bedroom.

If Delvaux is compared with another painter who employs a highly detailed naturalism like Lucian Freud (one of the contributors to this year's British pavilion), or with another naturalistic painter of erotic subjects like Balthus (a stranger, I believe, to the Biennale, though probably, with Gruber dead, the best painter under fifty in France), it is clear that he is no painter at all. His drawing is academic in the worst sense, his composition is that of a *metteur-en-scène*. His vision has none of the sensuousness which in Balthus matches the sensuality of the idea. Apart from his inspired rendering of pubic hair, his detail is purely descriptive, reflects none of the desperate visual curiosity of Freud's autopsies on the living. There is, in short, no poetry in the rendering but only in that which is rendered. But this lack of painterly qualities is precisely what makes Delvaux's art efficacious. For the point about painterly qualities is not that they lend a picture some kind of æsthetic value standing over and above its content, but that they give it *reality*. And Delvaux's works, unlike those of Balthus or Freud, are not images of reality; they are images of fantasy. We are not meant to be convinced that life is like this, but only that it would be interesting if it were. Consequently, the qualities of painting which give us sensuous pleasure and make us see reality afresh have no place in Delvaux's world. It is significant and sad that the two most recent paintings in his room in the Belgian pavilion reflect a desire to encompass the virtues of form and design. But this enterprise is so much out of key with the operations of Delvaux's imagination that the intrusion of such qualities, so far from heightening the effect of his imagery, merely neutralises it.

It is just the same with Magritte. It is palpably obvious that Magritte's pictures possess none of the qualities normally associated with serious painting. But Magritte is not concerned with good painting. Painting for him is not a means of conveying his vision of, or his feelings about, the external world: it is a vehicle which he uses for posing problems and stating paradoxes—only not intellectual problems and paradoxes visually expressed, but visual problems and paradoxes. Thus he paints a picture representing a canvas on an easel set up in view of a landscape, and the painted landscape on the canvas coincides precisely with that part of the real landscape which the canvas is obscuring. What, we are led to ask, is the relation between the scale of a painting and the scale of nature? And then, what is the relation between a world we know we can move about in and a world we think we can move about in?

It is clear that pictures which are puzzles rather than inspired recreations of experience are not objects one would wish to live with. But why should we assume that any image executed in paint on canvas ought to satisfy the platitudinous criterion of being-liveable-with? If we put on white flannels, it is not necessarily in order to play cricket. The craft of painting might well serve a purpose quite other than those hallowed by tradition. And the purpose to which Magritte puts it is really rather suited to the circumstances in which we generally look at paintings nowadays—not in churches or private houses, but in exhibition galleries. Could it not be that the cursory glance we give most pictures as we make our way through a gallery is more likely to get something out of a picture which wittily poses a problem than a picture which contains some profound emotion?

But, if it be admitted that Delvaux and Magritte put painting to a purpose altogether different from that of a Titian or a Rembrandt or a Boucher or a Picasso, it must be emphasised that they do not put it to a purpose which could, as is sometimes said, equally well be achieved by literature. For all that their iconography is the be-all and end-all of their pictures, and the pictorial treatment entirely negative, utilitarian, a verbal description of that

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iconography would not have the same effect as the picture. For words are such complex symbols, so rich in overtones and undertones, that such a description, if it had any vitality, would be bound to say or imply too much. The visual image, on the other hand, as used by Delvaux and Magritte, is a plain and literal statement of the marvellous, by which fantasy becomes fact and the private is rendered public without ceremony or equivocation. And serious painting or no, their imagery does satisfy the one criterion for evaluating works of art which is universally and eternally valid—the possession of imaginative authenticity.

ALTOGETHER, then, I believe that the view long held outside the dedicated ranks of the surrealists themselves that the only surrealist painters worth taking seriously are those who might be called the æsthetes, and that the others, the quasi-photographers in colour, are *pompiers* with perverted minds, is in need of revision, because, leaving aside the quasi-abstract surrealist sculptures of Giacometti (who, significantly, abandoned surrealism in 1935) and such inventions of Picasso's as verge on surrealism, it is the work of the latter group which is the more fascinating and disturbing in content, and it was, after all, a renewal of interest in content—in opposition to the æstheticism of the fauves and cubists—and a desire to expand the subject-matter of the arts that brought surrealism into being. So long as the aspirations of surrealism are granted any validity—and even those who have contemned its visual art have not hesitated to admit the worth of its literary products—the validity must be admitted of the kind of surrealist painting which resembles the coloured photograph. When all is said and done, the camera was the medium which produced surrealism's greatest contributions, *Un Chien Andalou* and *L'Age d'Or*. And once we begin to think of the paintings of Delvaux and Magritte and Dali in his better days as stills from further films which were never turned, they begin to make sense: they become images pure and simple with no pretensions to the virtues of painting.

But the surrealist films have counterparts closer than these among images made by hand (actually, not entirely by hand). I mean Max Ernst's *Femme 100 Têtes* and *Semaine de Bonté*, those novels in pictures pieced together from Victorian engravings. If it be the case, as I believe, that these stand together with the Bunuel and Dali films as the summits of surrealist achievement in a visual form, the implication is that surrealism tends towards a narrative series of images rather than the single image which contains an entire cosmos. But I do not think the inference should be drawn that the surrealist imagination is therefore essentially dramatic rather than pictorial, for the same thing can be said of medieval art. And is it not the case that surrealism likewise is didactic, inspired by a conscious moral purpose?

As to Ernst in particular, he must not be overlooked as the creator of some of surrealism's most memorable single images in a naturalistic style—those early paintings such as *L'Eléphant Célèbes* and *Pietà, ou La Révolution la Nuit*, the execution of which, thanks to a touching technical ineptitude, gives them a resemblance not to coloured photographs but to clumsily painted inn-signs or labels on date-boxes. This deprives them of the slick conviction of a Delvaux but it gives them a compensating poignancy.

Ernst, however, was not content with this kind of achievement and by the mid-1920's began to reject this naïve means of communication in favour of a style which was at once more esoteric and exploited more fully the evocative possibilities of paint. Not only did his manner thereby become embarrassingly arty—because the æsthetic values had been imposed from without—but his matter became increasingly commonplace, with its big bad forests and its bigger, badder bogey-men. Ernst's development, indeed, reveals with some pathos the limitations of surrealism when it refuses to accept its proper level, a non-æsthetic level.

THE thirty rooms in the Palazzo Centrale devoted to Italian art do not pretend to offer at every Biennale a complete survey of current activity in Italy—for example, Manzù, Marini, and Morandi are absentees this year—but they do provide a very clear notion of its main directions and its general quality.

On this showing, there is not only very little to be said for contemporary Italian painting, but very little to be said about it. It does not seem to be making any very significant formal discoveries, while its content is either deficient or banal—deficient in the art tending towards abstraction, banal in that tending towards realism. The handling of paint, moreover,

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tends to show a lack of that affection for and sympathy with the medium which would be present in a comparable exhibition of French painting. One notable exception to this is the admirable Filippo de Pisis, that exponent of a curiously personal brand of impressionism, closer to Guardi than to Monet and Pissarro, who is the most distinguished representative at this Biennale of the older generation.

Among the participating painters working in an abstract or post-cubist tradition, the most imaginative and vital seems to me to be Mattia Moreni, whose romantic-post-cubist landscapes are the product of an approach very similar to that of Graham Sutherland in his work of the early Forties. His colour is fiercer than Sutherland's, his forms more jagged, and, while he is the less evocative painter of the two, he is more able to give energy and life to paintings on a fairly large scale. Another painter of talent working in more or less the same vein is Afro, whose forms are much more soft and serpentine and whose colour much more restrained.

Many of the more realistic or expressionistic paintings and drawings might be intended to serve as posters for some of the more sexily lachrymose post-war Italian films—which is to say that, resembling posters rather than the films themselves, they tend to exhibit an excessively heightened sentiment. The most interesting offering is, perhaps inevitably, Guttuso's, whose social realism is, of course, rooted in the post-cubist tradition. Having shown at the last Biennale a large figure-composition on a *risorgimento* theme, he has now produced one on a contemporary theme in which his mood has shifted from the heroic to the satiric. The painting depicts youths and girls jiving, talking and drinking in a *boîte* of the type curiously known as "existentialist." It is called *Boogie-Woogie a Roma*, and in the background is a painting of one of Mondrian's paintings of the *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* series. The intention presumably is to identify and jointly condemn decadent bourgeois abstract art and decadent bourgeois night-life. In view of the social-realist character of this tract against be-jeaned, besotted and bewildered youth, it may be pertinent to point out that boogie-woogie is an anachronism in a crew-cut world, since it is a musical style current a decade or two ago: Guttuso is unfortunate in that there is no celebrated abstract painting entitled *Bop*.

The black-and-white reproduction accompanying this article shows how skilfully Guttuso's picture is composed and how journalistically it is drawn, but not the way in which it is deprived of unity by an excessive emphasis on local colour. Its defects are not only formal. Clearly it is meant to indicate an attitude of disapproval towards its subject: the lonely figure of a girl at a table in the foreground is obviously not merely crossed in love or in need of a Fernet Branca but is a symbol of a lost generation. Guttuso, however, has not managed to repress a pronounced sensuous pleasure in the well-formed bodies of the dancers. Certainly, in so doing he reveals a respect for truth which would be lacking in an expressionist painter, who, given the same subject and social-critical intention, would have made the appearance of the dancers repellent. Yet perhaps this latter, less ambiguous, treatment would have made the picture psychologically more telling. As it is, we cannot help feeling that Guttuso has tried to have his cake and spit it out.

The curious thing about the state of the arts in Italy is that, whereas her painting is generally mediocre, her sculpture is more vital than that of any country in the world to-day. This may be because the Italians seem to have an extraordinary facility in producing graceful and pleasing *objects*, whether utilitarian or decorative: they produce elegant statues as they produce elegant motor-cars. And, certainly, it is the stylishness and elegance of their sculpture and its wonderfully tactful handling of the medium which commends it. It is seldom very profound, and, like their painting, has not made any shatteringly new formal discoveries. On the contrary, it has derived its energy from the rediscovery of ancient sculpture—Gothic, Romanesque, Etruscan, Chinese. Thus the bronzes by Mirko exhibited at the Biennale are unashamedly derivative from early Chinese bronzes and the Romanesque, both in their shapes and in their treatment of surface, but their complete mastery of style gives them authenticity, is the very source of their poetry. Again, it is the combination of the two characteristic virtues of contemporary Italian sculpture—a profound sympathy with the medium and a consummate sense of style—which give the wood-carvings of Pericle Fazzini their tenderness and warmth.

Where style counts for so much, we tend to get a wilful exaggeration of its traits: the

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seductive affectedness and preciosity of a Marini or an Emilio Greco has much in common with the spirit of Tuscan Mannerism. A Mascherini can take the characteristic affectations of modern Italian sculpture to the point of self-caricature without quite becoming absurd, because of the sheer shamelessness with which he exploits them.

So pervasive are the elements of elegance and preciosity in Italian sculpture today that they even insinuate themselves into the coloured terracotta sculptures of Agenore Fabbri, for all the brutality and vulgarity of their expressionistic-realist treatment of women and children in distress. It is in fact their odd reconciliation of a journalistic blatancy and literalness with a streak of almost effeminate elegance that gives them their pathos and makes Fabbri the most interesting of all the Italian social realists of today.

THIS review of the Biennale has been confined to a discussion of its two dominant features—the Surrealist works and the Italian section. In conclusion, I should like to draw attention to a few of the outstanding artists represented in the national pavilions.

There are three important exhibitions of dead artists. Norway has contributed a well-chosen show of Edvard Munch (displayed not in the Giardini but in the Ala Napoleonica in the Piazza San Marco), while the German pavilion includes rooms devoted to Paul Klee and Oskar Schlemmer.

Among the members of the older generations of living artists, André Derain contributes a particularly distinguished wall to the French pavilion. His six paintings are all late-ish works. Their controlled exuberance of feeling, their complete domination of the medium, and their fusion of sensuousness with intellectual vigour entitle them, for all their palpable indebtedness to a variety of 17th century sources, to be ranked among the most considerable achievements in the art of the last thirty years.

As to the less established figures, I for my part would award the palm for sculpture to Germaine Richier (France), for graphic art to Božidar Jakac (Yugoslavia), for abstract painting to Jean-Paul Riopelle (Canada), and for figurative painting to Francis Bacon. However devoid of chauvinism one may be, it has been immensely gratifying to see what an impression Bacon has made on many Europeans who have seen his work for the first time in Venice, to find it described by at least one French critic as "*la seule véritable révélation de toute la Biennale.*" It is agreeable to have such a confirmation of one's own feeling that the work of a painter who looks important in England, where it is so easy for English painters to look important, has stood up to the dual test of international competition and the Adriatic sun.

David Sylvester

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Communications

AFTER THE THAW

SIR—Readers of your magazine might be interested in developments on the Soviet literary scene since the publication of Mark Alexander's article (ENCOUNTER, No. 9). The "new liberalism," mentioned by Mr. Alexander, has recently suffered some severe checks. Among the books recently published, and now condemned, there are Panferov's *Volga*, Zorin's play, *The Guests*, and Virta's *Crown Prince*. But the case of Ilya Ehrenburg is the most interesting. In part, because he is regarded as a sort of spokesman for the régime. In part, too, because his novel—now sharply under attack—was entitled precisely *The Thaw*.

The two main characters in *The Thaw* are Volodya and Sonia, son and daughter of an old Bolshevik, and both members of the Komsomol. From their earliest years they are concerned only with their own advantage. Volodya decides to become a painter, because that is the easiest way of attaining wealth and fame. In Moscow, where he goes to study, everything runs smoothly: he climbs steadily up the ladder, but then he makes a slip, speaking too openly of his personal ambitions to an influential member of the artists' association. It turns out that he "is not a genuine painter" after all, and he is forced to return to the small industrial town where he grew up, "in order to draw inspiration from factory life." There, Volodya strikes up an acquaintance with a factory director, and when an article praising the director appears in *Izvestia*, begins to paint his portrait. Of course, as Volodya himself says mockingly, in the portrait the director is "every inch a leader of Soviet industry, his chin up and in his eyes a look of iron determination." The picture, he reckons, will be hung in the local museum, and that will bring him 20,000 roubles. Volodya dreams of the Pobeda car he will be able to buy.

He is completely cynical: "Everybody tacks and turns about, everybody tries to wriggle through, tells lies—but some are clever about it and some stupid." It is not surprising to find him saying, in a tone of light sympathy: "I understand father when he talks about ideals; it's his right to do so. He grew up in another age, in the age of revolution, of romance."

Sonia is not cynical like her brother. But she is not more pleasant for that. She takes everything in deadly earnest. "Soviet man must master not only nature but his own feelings," she says, and studies electrodynamics, although literature is far closer to her heart. She praises Mayakovsky, although she really prefers Blok and Essenin, and rejects the man she loves because he has no prospects of getting an apartment. Everything is calculated; expediency comes first, and at nineteen she never acts on impulse.

It is true that Ehrenburg suggests that there are other kinds of young people, but he does not depict them. These two are presented as typical. Is it any wonder that *Komsomolskaya Pravda* objected?

It is interesting to compare *The Thaw* with *The Second Day*, a novel Ehrenburg wrote twenty years ago, and set in a similar scene. In *The Second Day*, the present generation of top-ranking engineers is still young. They are young Communists, like Volodya and Sonia—but how different! The romance of the revolution has faded by 1932, but those who built the Kuznetsk plant were still fired with enthusiasm. They revelled in ideals, even when injustice surrounded them. The cynic and detractor of that day—another Volodya—commits suicide in the end. Unable to grasp the fierce and relentless power of the new and tremendous life around him, he begins to doubt himself; he feels himself a stranger in the society in which he is living, a creature of the past rather than the present. The Volodya of *The Thaw* is quite different: he neither belongs to a different society, nor does he feel drawn to a different age. He does not stand aside from what is happening around him, nor does he find it incomprehensible. On the contrary; he is a living fragment of the present, inseparable from it, at home in it.

Ehrenburg merely records the fact that today, not

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enthusiasts, but cynics set the tone. Even in the warmth of the recent political thaw in Soviet letters, he does not dare to explain how it happened. But there are a few hints in the story of one of the most important characters in the book, the engineer Korotaev.

"He was in the tenth class," writes Ehrenburg, "when in the autumn of 1936 his stepfather was arrested. The following day, near his home, he met his best friend, Misha. Korotaev stopped him, wanting to tell him of his misfortune, and ask him what he should do. But Misha's face darkened and he crossed without a word to the other side of the street. Shortly thereafter Korotaev was expelled from the Komsomol."

This is, I think, the first explicit allusion in Soviet literature to the fearful tragedy which befell virtually the entire Soviet intelligentsia in the years 1936 to 1938.

ALFRED BURMEISTER

Munich, Germany

ON WORK

SIR—Industrial problems of the type mentioned by Daniel Bell are as old as industry itself. Management and the worker are traditionally in opposition on matters concerning the relationship between time and work, and the wages paid for doing the work, assuming the natural role of buyer and seller with each determined to get the best deal possible. The industrial engineer has attempted to develop a concept of standard work pace that would be acceptable to both management and the worker and to use this concept as a basis for developing consistency in the approach to work measurement. No informed student of work measurement procedures will claim that standard pace can be as clearly identified for all possible situations as can other units of measurement such as the foot, the yard, the pound. Nor will he claim scientific accuracy for the process, although in at least one particular he follows the same procedures as does the scientist. That is, he does not accept for general use a new theory until it has been thoroughly tested. In this respect he has the experience of many years to support the concept of standard work pace. He knows that many industrial plants have been using standard work pace as a basis for establishing work quotas for a long time. And, the author notwithstanding, the use of incentive wage plans is equally widespread.

In the light of such experiences, it is difficult to understand why the work of the Industrial Engineer in developing work measurement procedures is condemned in such a forthright manner. . . .

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PECCAVIMUS

SIR—It is difficult to grasp the meaning of an essay such as that of W. H. Auden on "Balaam and the Ass" in your July issue, if quotations used by the writer from foreign literature are misquotations. This is the case with some of the excerpts from Goethe's *Faust*, and with one of the quotations from Richard Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. Unfortunately, the translations repeat the mistakes in German grammar made by Mr. Auden.

On page 39 there is a misquotation. Mephisto is made to say:

Ich will mich hier zu deinem Dienst verbinden,
Auf deinen Wirk *nicht rasten und nicht ruhn;*

The original reads *Wink*, and not *Wirk*, and the translation, therefore, should be: "neither rest nor shirk whenever you give me a hint," not "neither shirk nor rest from your *work*."

On page 40, the first quotation, though correctly translated, contains no less than three spelling mistakes, of which one would destroy the sense of the couplet: *Genies*, as printed, would be the plural of *Genie* = genius; correct German spelling is *geniess*.

The second quotation, on the same page, has been mistranslated by you:

Ein Teil der Finsternis, die sich das Licht gebar,

is not, as you put it, "a part of the darkness which light brought forth," but on the contrary, "a part of the darkness which brought forth light."

The third quotation on the same page is misplaced in the context of the *Faust* drama. It is not the Lord who describes Mephisto as one who always created good in spite of willing evil, it is Mephisto himself who, in reply to Faust's question: "Who are you?" says in the third scene of the play proper:

Ein Teil von jener Kraft,
Die stets das Böse will und stets das Gute schafft.

Similarly, on page 42,

Dem guten Marke,
dienst ich ihm hold,

makes no sense at all in German; it should run "*dient' ich ihm hold,*" and the translation, given on page 43, should run, not "you served him well," but "I served him well."

HENRY HELLMANN

London, N.10

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BOOKS

Studies and Outlines

THE purpose of this three-volume work* is, according to the introduction, "to meet the needs of students in the upper forms of secondary schools and in the early years of University courses," and its subject is a history of European civilisation. But anyone who looks back to his own last school year and early undergraduate days will probably remember that he felt the need of humdrum concordances compiled by people who had studied the academic obstacle race, rather than of splendid entertainment of the mind such as is offered by the editors of this fine miscellany. These three volumes are for later years, as is almost proved by the fact that they are most easily and valuably read where the reader has had the advantage of conventional study. If the instruction of eighteen-year-olds is really the purpose of this undertaking then it is not likely to succeed.

The subject of European history is beyond detailed chronological study, and this book belongs to that growing company of outlines and studies of the past which are the antidote to the evils of specialisation imposed on us by modern accumulations of state documents. The importance of such outlines and studies can hardly be exaggerated, for unless scholars are prepared to be bold, and occasionally to risk their reputations in surveys of this kind, which cannot be written without a good deal of questionable generalisation, then the past and man's inheritance will cease to be of major significance. Here is a model of how the antidote should be applied. The three volumes have been given coherence by strong editorship, and so they fulfil their function. There are ten authors, but they have not been assembled for a piece of book-making. All the essays are closely related to the great theme: the consequence to the world of European achievement. There is a lengthy introduction by Professor Gordon Childe on the origin of civilised man in the world (and the uninstructed reader, such as the present reviewer, applauds the assurance with which the great new Piltdown test is passed), and the whole venture terminates with a three-chapter conclusion by Sir Ernest Barker, one of the best occasional pieces which even he has ever written.

Every reader will wish to voice some grievance, real or imagined, that certain of his pets have not received the coddling to which he feels they are entitled. This reviewer wants to protest about the treatment of music. It is surely a very curious thing that only in Europe has music grown to the dimensions of a great art. Delight and skill in music are just as prominent in civilised Asia, and yet the results, after three thousand years of civilisation, are quite negligible by the standards of the West. The common feeling among listeners to music is that no art is more deeply founded in human nature, and yet none has been explored over so small a part of the civilised world. Nothing is said in this book to answer or to point to an answer to that riddle. Professor Vermeil, alone among the contributors, gives any serious attention to music at all, and then not for very long.

Another grievance, though not about a pet: in one part of the book, Socialism appears to be treated with unfairness, though I should hasten to say that in the essays of Professors

* *The European Inheritance*. SIR ERNEST BARKER, SIR GEORGE CLARK, and P. VAUCHER (Editors). Oxford, Clarendon Press; London, Cumberlege. Three Volumes 42s. each. £5 5s. the set.

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Brunn and Vermeil are to be found admirable analyses of this subject. However, a distressing piece of illustration is used. The plan of the book is that each section has a brief appendix in which certain master documents of the European inheritance are reprinted for consultation. At the end of the essay on the period 1914–50 no less than four extracts from Mr. John Strachey's *Theory and Practice of Socialism* are reprinted. They provide an interesting record of a kind of opinion fashionable in 1936, but it seems an extraordinary injustice to a great movement and its influence in the world to give this peevish stuff as the principal illustration of its thought in England in recent times. There must have been many superior things available to the editors.

And one last wail about too much coddling of other people's pets. There is a widespread belief in the world that inclusion in the Roman Empire gave any people an incomparable and indeed indispensable start in life. Old R.E. boys, so to speak, come from the best school. The origin of this idea is not known to me, but it received lofty expression from Paul Valéry in a passage of his prose writing which is reprinted in one of the appendices. Elsewhere in the work the truth of the idea is assumed. But can it be true? If only on patriotic grounds I sincerely hope not, as Great Britain cannot conceivably be considered as entitled to wear an Old Imperial tie, too many traces of Roman rule having been much too thoroughly obliterated in the early dark age. Those who believe in the theory find in it an explanation of German misbehaviour; but how do they then account for the extreme and almost excessive regard for law, restraint, decency, and the rest of the Roman virtues, to be found today in Scandinavia and Denmark, and even in Thule herself? And if the theory is only half true then the law-abiding character of the East Mediterranean should be proverbial by now. I cannot help feeling that here we have an absurd superstition, an exaggeration of a part-truth, which should have no place in a work of this kind, and is ripe for suppression elsewhere. With this pet, I should like to turn out two others, twins, which are given a needlessly good time here. The terms "Left Wing" and "Right Wing" are of the greatest value in discussion of the political movements and revolutions of the 19th century, but when they are applied, as Professor Vermeil applies them, to the growth of Fascism and Communism, they only become hindrances to understanding. They have had their day and their use. Let them now go and die. They are no longer young, fresh, or interesting.

SOME of the style in which the book is written is curious. Three of the writers are French and it has evidently been the decision of the editors to preserve a Gallic character in the English of these learned men. Professor Vermeil, therefore, expresses himself in the historic present, and his turns of phrase, always grammatically correct, are sometimes idiomatic only in his own language. For all its dangers of presenting grave studies as mirth-provokingly quaint, the system works effectively enough, but gets somewhat out of control in Professor Mornet's remarkable section on the development of literature and culture in the 18th century. He says on the subject of literary composition: "There is also needed, in addition, *agrément*: there are needed *délicatesses*; and often there is need of a certain *je ne sais quoi*." This is how Frenchmen were represented as talking on the British music-hall stage in the best of the dear old days. The professor opens one paragraph as follows: "We have already said that there was always a certain feeling for nature, even in France. . . ." We know what he means, but to preserve a French syntax ought he to represent his countrymen as a race of lunatics?

It will be seen that none of the charges which this reviewer can bring against *The European Inheritance* are of any gravity or concerned with essentials. This is not only due to pusillanimity in the presence of leading authorities, but to a respectable sense of awe which comes from having read one of the best collections of essays made in recent times. The subjects range from the earliest evidence of Homo Sapiens to the European situation after the Second World War, and every section of this magnificent survey has claims to be considered a masterpiece of clarity and concision. Perhaps the very best thing in the whole three volumes is the fifty-page essay by Professor C. H. Dodd on the Jewish and early Christian contributions to our civilisation. It gains from its juxtaposition to Sir William Tarn's miraculously compressed, beautifully balanced, and often witty

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account of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds.

Of European life three centuries ago Sir George Clark says: "There was endless violence, corruption, ignorance, ugliness, waste, and misery; but there was civilisation, marvellously rich and fertile, and it was sustained by society as a whole." None of the contributors is able to speak of the present in such confident terms. The title of the book becomes somewhat ironical in the later pages where Fascism, Communism, and World War have to be recorded as the principal European gifts to mankind, and opposite page 226 of Volume III, dealing with our own times, we have a photograph of one of the ugliest buildings erected by human ingenuity at any time. One critic has been moved to describe the book as an exercise in corpse-identification. But this is to misrepresent the abiding impression. Melancholy reading as all modern history must be in the age of iron curtains and super-bombs, the conclusion to which the essays tend (and which is not tacked on for appearance's sake) can be described as one of gravely restrained optimism. Speaking of the East-West division of the present world Sir Ernest Barker says: "It is one of the lessons of history that adjoining civilisations must in the long run come into contact and even begin to 'cross'. The process, when it begins, will naturally be strongest in the debatable land between the eastern Baltic and the Ægean Sea. The West will be wise to be patient. That is one of the conditions of its own perpetuity. If its liberalism and its nationalism and its socialism, each mixed with and each moderating the other, have something to give the border-area of eastern Europe, they will give it in time, and by virtue of patience, when once there is any desire to receive. And that desire may emerge even sooner than we expect."

Christopher Sykes

THE ART OF OPERA

"Musik *weckt Gefühle, die drängen zum Worte: Im Wort lebt ein Sehnen nach Klang und Musik*"; so muses the Countess in *Capriccio*, that extraordinary work of Strauss's old age in which he reflects on the nature and problems of opera as a serious mode of artistic expression. Yet it is unusual in the history of that curious art that both a good composer and a good poet should decide that each needed the collaboration of the other. The account of the relationship between Strauss and Hofmannsthal which this new complete edition * of their correspondence provides is, therefore, of great interest and importance not only because they produced some of the best works of art of this century, (*Der Rosenkavalier* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*, at least, are masterpieces of a high order), but also because their letters make us consider the nature of opera itself.

Strauss and Hofmannsthal began to co-operate seriously in 1906; *Elektra* was their first joint work, a casual conversation six years earlier about a ballet led to nothing. From then on they continued to work together until Hofmannsthal's death in 1929; and, indeed, a telegram from Strauss thanking the poet for the revised first act of *Arabella* lay unopened on Hofmannsthal's desk on the day he died, about to set out for the funeral of his elder son Franz, who had killed himself two days earlier. The composer was the elder of the two by ten years; he was already a successful and famous composer who had just shocked and startled the public by the violent sensationalism of *Salome*. Hofmannsthal had, when still a very young man, produced a handful of lyric poems of the highest quality ("If he had died then, what a genius we should have lost," was the epigram made about him), and he had settled down as a successful playwright and man of letters, a conscientious, sensitive artist

* Richard Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal: *Briefwechsel*. Atlantis Verlag, Zürich.

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characteristic of the last days of that Austrian Empire about whose fate he was so worried.

The relationship between the two men was purely professional. They met seldom and then mostly to discuss details of libretto and score. The letters tell one nothing about the external events of the period in which they were written; the war is dismissed in a few phrases of routine patriotism; defeat and revolution are overshadowed by the difficulties of arranging for the production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Personal griefs and sickness are only mentioned if they hinder the common work. It is not clear from the correspondence that the two men even liked each other very much. (There were the usual difficulties about money that anyone who was associated with Strauss seems to have experienced.) To understand Hofmannsthal's preoccupations, and the personal sensibility and affection of which he was capable, we have to turn to another recently published collection of his letters—those to Eberhard von Bodenhausen.* Yet all that he was capable of as an artist he dedicated to Strauss; they influenced each other profoundly, and the letters contain a sincere and frank exchange of views about all aspects of their joint work. The Strauss-Hofmannsthal correspondence is the record of a unique partnership between two men concerned with the creation of civilised works of art, uninhibited by any need to justify their activity or to waste their creative powers wondering about the relationship of the artist to society.

At first Strauss seems to have taken the initiative. After *Elektra*, which he took over as a ready-made tragedy, we find him asking for "*einen schönen Renaissancestoff*," a "Cesare Borgia" or a "Savonarola"; there is much discussion of a projected "Semiramis" (one of those unwritten masterpieces which tempt the imagination as does, even more, an opera on Turgenev's *Smoke* proposed twenty-five years later). There was also the possibility of a "Saul and David," for Strauss was much, and characteristically, impressed by the popular success of a revival of *Aïda* in new oriental *décor*. However, it soon becomes clear that it was the poet who chose the themes. *Der Rosenkavalier, Ariadne, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Die Aegyptische Helena*, and *Arabella* were all in a sense imposed on Strauss. Yet once Hofmannsthal had sketched a theme and begun to send Strauss drafts of the text, Strauss's tough and practical sense of the theatre often produced effective changes. The second act of *Rosenkavalier*, for instance, was remodelled at his suggestion: "Don't be angry because I am spurring on your Pegasus in this way, but this opera must be first class and, as I said, Act II does not correspond to what I expect from you and what you could produce." "I try to put myself in the place of the public," Strauss wrote on another occasion, "for whom, after all, we are performing." There was clearly a great difference in the effect on Strauss's musical inspiration of different texts. The first act of *Rosenkavalier* "*wird sich komponieren wie Ot und Butterschmalz*"; but the first act of *Arabella* "won't begin to sound for me, and frankly speaking, the characters don't interest me." Indeed, it is possible that had Hofmannsthal lived to revise the other two acts of *Arabella* as he did the first, some of the weaknesses (the end of Act II, for example) in this touching work might have been avoided.

Hofmannsthal was always ready to listen to these suggestions for the alteration or improvement of his text. His modesty is remarkable when one remembers what a successful poet and dramatist he was in his own right. He was ready to spend hours reading the libretti of second-rate operas to which Strauss often referred him: "It will amuse you to hear that I have the texts of *Schwarzer Domino, Wildschütz, Teufels Anteil* and others here and study them sometimes in bed in the evening," or again twelve years later, "Perhaps you would be a little touched if you could look through the branches of an old apple tree into a little room and see your faithful librettist . . . with your last letter in front of him and in his hand a text of *Zar und Zimmermann*." Neither Strauss nor Hofmannsthal was afraid of experiment: indeed, one of Strauss's fears was of being behind the times—perhaps this, incidentally, is a reason for the surprising, almost Stravinskyan neo-classicism of the first act of *Die Liebe der Danae* which contrasts oddly with the uninhibited shower of late-romantic gold elsewhere in the opera. Hofmannsthal's expressionism in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* has its counterpart in Strauss's

* Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Eberhard von Bodenhausen: *Briefe der Freundschaft*, 1897–1919. Eugen Diederichs Verlag, Berlin.

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advanced chromaticism in *Die Aegyptische Helena*.

Both were ready to learn from experience and to vary their style: "Everything I do for you," Hofmannsthal writes after *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, "must have a style of its own [*ein Genre für sich*]: thus all your works up to now have each had a style of its own, only *Elektra* perhaps stands too close to a mere variation on *Salome*. . . . This is the case with Mozart and Wagner—each work is unique—the contrary is the series of stylistically similar works of Meyerbeer and Puccini." Thus *Die Aegyptische Helena* (originally conceived as a "*kleines leichtes Oper*") is to be without the *longueurs* of *Rosenkavalier*, while "*über 'Die Frau ohne Schatten' sind wir beide zu schwer geworden.*" Above all, both poet and composer were practical men of the theatre anxious about the effect their works would make on the stage; and here they came up against one of the major problems of serious opera—how can singers physically represent dramatic and romantic heroes and heroines?

In practice they were very lucky. The greatest interpreters of their roles—Lotte Lehmann, Richard Mayr, and Elisabeth Schumann, for example—were accomplished actors as well as singers. But much of the time they had to put up with less. Strauss complained, for instance, that Elisabeth Rethberg, the first Helena, had an "*etwas bürgerliches Exterieur*" (and Hofmannsthal was very disappointed that Jeritza was not available), but the choice was a hard one: "Rethberg with a reputation and a wonderful voice or Schenker with a beautiful appearance, but a beginner with a weak middle range." Again, it seems to have been partly their concern for dramatic plausibility that made author and composer decide that their adolescent characters—Octavian in *Rosenkavalier*, the Composer in the *Ariadne* prologue, and even, it was considered for a moment, Da-ud in *Die Aegyptische Helena*—should be played by women and not by men since the average tenor was unthinkable in these youthful parts. In the case of the Composer, Hofmannsthal was very worried by this but was forced to accept the role as a soprano one by Strauss's practical arguments. (It is odd that his instinctive repugnance to the idea of the Composer being sung by a woman should not have saved him from inventing the equivocal and rather distasteful role of Zdenka

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in *Arabella*.) The letters are full of complaints by both men about inadequate singing and production of their works. Indeed, their demands were exacting; *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, especially, although it contains some of Strauss's best music, has a libretto of extreme obscurity and needs an elaborate production of a kind that the ordinary opera house finds it hard to provide. And most sopranos are lamentably unlike Helen of Troy.

However, as one reads these letters one is faced with a bigger problem than the practical difficulties of casting and producing operas. Why did a writer as good as Hofmannsthal want to write opera texts? Why write operas at all if, as Strauss wrote cynically, nearly a third of the words of the text are lost, and the best dialogue is more or less uninteresting to the general public? These questions are unanswered in this correspondence, in which opera as a natural form of artistic expression is taken for granted; but the reader, like Strauss himself, is left with the problems very much in his mind. Wagner and Verdi—at least the Verdi of *Otello* and *Falstaff*—had transformed the nature of opera. From being regarded as an elegant, affecting, and sometimes stirring form of entertainment—a genre into which even the great masterpieces of the past, a *Don Giovanni* or a *Fidelio*, were forced with difficulty to fit—it had become an art for which the highest æsthetic claims could be made; indeed, Wagner had conceived of it as a kind of super-art, a synthesis of all the others: music, poetry, and design. Opera had become serious and intellectually respectable by the 20th century, and composers began to be aware of the problems that this self-consciousness and respectability involved.

Some were content, like Puccini, to take powerful, crude, and dramatically effective texts and set them to music that made up for what it lacked in subtlety by theatrical power, nervous energy, and the opportunity it gave for fine singing. Others practically sacrificed the singers in the interest of audibility, as Berg did in *Wozzeck*, using the orchestra to give unity to the work by a highly complex formal musical structure and to create the colour and mood of the sombre drama. Strauss and Hofmannsthal aimed at greater subtlety of plot and character than Puccini—especially once they had abandoned the creation of immediate, almost physical, dramatic tension as in *Elektra*—but they also, unlike Berg, aimed at a genuine singable melodic line. The two models that Strauss had most constantly in his mind appear to have been *Die Meistersinger* and *Falstaff*. His other Wagnerian models he seems to have abandoned under Hofmannsthal's influence, for the dramatist had a considerable distaste for the more heroic and epic works of Wagner. Yet neither *Meistersinger* nor *Falstaff* has a text that can be read with pleasure independently of the music; and it was just such texts that Hofmannsthal was providing. *Elektra* had been performed before Strauss set it, and with Duse in the title role; *Rosenkavalier* and *Arabella* can be read and enjoyed almost as much as such a non-operatic comedy of Hofmannsthal as *Der Schwierige*. Both Strauss and Hofmannsthal were concerned that the words should be heard, and Strauss devised, in the *Ariadne* prologue and in the *Aegyptische Helena*, for instance, an effective easy-running vocal line that could be heard above the orchestra and thus avoided the tediousness of *recitativo secco* and the strain on voice and ears of *Sprechgesang*. Hofmannsthal, too, was anxious that the character of the dialogue, the peculiar Viennese flavour of the comedies, should be preserved, and was insistent in refusing to accept alterations that might destroy this. Yet, in spite of all this care, even in the best performances, not all the text is audible. What were the advantages gained?

"*Im Wort lebt ein Sehnen nach Klang und Musik.*" Music, that is to say, enables the listener to enrich the words he hears with his own imaginings, so that the plight of the Marschallin, for example, or the predicament, half-comical, half-serious, of Ariadne creates a mood which surrounds and extends the meaning of the spoken word. As the Composer in *Capriccio* claims: "*In einem Akkord erlebst Du eine Welt!*" Music, too, is often able to hint at what is going on in the minds of the characters and thus takes the place of the soliloquy, but there is a limit to its power here; only fleeting thoughts of an obvious or symbolic kind can be conveyed, and it is a device that can easily become tiresome, as it does at certain moments of The Ring. Finally, music can provide a formal coherence to the drama, connecting earlier episodes with later ones, pointing forward or backward, or creating, as in

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Elektra, an atmosphere of actual physical excitement by means of rhythm and orchestration and the pointing of a climax. The weakness of all music drama that depends on a melodic line and not just on the creation of orchestral effect is, of course, that even the greatest composers have only a limited stock of melodic types, and these types are better suited to some moods than others. The exact difference between situations set to similar tunes cannot always be precisely conveyed, so that, in the case of Strauss, Chrysothemis's longing for husband and children and a normal life does not sound so very different from Arabella's hopeful eagerness for an ideal lover. Yet, at its best, Strauss's music enhances and enriches Hofmannsthal's text, just as settings by Schubert or Wolf enhance even the greatest poems, by giving the words overtones, a *Nachklang* that lingers in the memory, linking the verse indissolubly to the musical phrase to which it is set, enriching it by the orchestral colour that accompanies it.

It is in this evocation of a mood and in the creation of character that Strauss and Hofmannsthal excel. Hofmannsthal's words are made richer and more imaginative—more poetical, in fact—by the sensuous music. And Strauss's music is given a precision by the words that it would otherwise inevitably lack. Their work is unmistakably opera—neither melodrama nor *Sprechgesang* nor musical comedy. It belongs to a tradition that, for all it has derived from them, goes back beyond Wagner and Verdi. Perhaps the Marschallin and Octavian are unthinkable without Mozart's Countess and Cherubino before them. It may be, indeed, that the Strauss operas mark the end of this tradition and that opera in the 20th century must break with it and start on something quite fresh. Berg and Krenek have hinted at a new style: but so far *Wozzeck* remains an isolated masterpiece. Stravinsky, in *The Rake's Progress*, has evaded the problem by going back to an earlier style and behaving, not only as if Wagner and Verdi had never written, but also as if Marschner and Weber had never existed. No contemporary composer has produced anything as successful, as moving, or as enjoyable as even the least good operas of Strauss. But no contemporary composer has had a Hofmannsthal as librettist.

James Joll

MIRRORS OF GERMAN HISTORY

THESE essays* written by German historians since the War, and now collected into a single volume by Dr. Hans Kohn, have a double interest. They reflect one of the most important sides of the intellectual discussion which is slowly beginning to revive in Western Germany and—without apparently meaning to do so—they pose the question: how far can the picture which the historian draws of the past influence the present and the future; how far is it simply a reflection of the present?

The different contributions, eleven in number besides Hans Kohn's two introductory essays, vary greatly in scope and quality. One or two, like Professor Schnabel's discussion of Bismarck or Dr. Puttkamer's review of German-Polish relations, are concerned with working over again a theme of German history. The majority are more interested in the general concepts which the historian employs in analysing the past. Here there is a certain amount of repetition, but also an impressive honesty and a good deal of plain speaking.

It is a pity that Dr. Kohn was unable to include in his collection any essays by those historians who do not share in this search for a new view of German history and who are eager to restore the authority of the old. As a result, the book gives a one-sided picture of present trends in German historical thought; the opposite view is only to be learned by

* *German History: Some New German Views.* Edited by Hans Kohn. Allen and Unwin. 18s.

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implication from those who are critical of the official German version of history as it has been taught in German universities and schools for so long.

The clearest account of the critics' objections is given by a young Swiss historian, Walther Hofer, who compresses them into three short sentences:

> "Power is idealised and glorified.
> War is made heroic and moral.
> The national idea is radicalised and made absolute."

The rest of the essays in this volume develop and illustrate these themes, sometimes subtly in Meinecke's study of Ranke and Burckhardt, sometimes more sharply in Hofer's own essay and those contributed by J. A. von Rantzau and Alfred von Martin. "The power, authority and prestige of the nation," Hofer writes, "became the supreme values to which all moral, spiritual and economic values and functions were subordinated." Or as Dr. Kohn puts it: "Many people everywhere succumbed to the demoniac temptations of power, but German historians surrounded this acceptance with the halo of a philosophy which they extolled for its 'deep' understanding of the forces of history and nature."

This diagnosis is familiar enough, at least outside Germany. But why did this happen, what has led to the divergence between German and Western thought, which every writer in this volume underlines?

DR. HOFER again puts into a couple of sentences what is suggested by half a dozen of the contributors: the riddle of German intellectual development, he believes, lies in the nature of romanticism. Hofer quotes the remark of Fritz Strich: "When the German spirit follows its own path, it is the spirit of romanticism. Its classic ideal can only be realised with foreign assistance." Romanticism is marked by that strong feeling for the irrational, the visionary and the boundless, by that exaggeration and over-intensification of ideas which so often mar German thought. "The history of the German spirit and hence of German historical thinking is principally characterised by the continuing disintegration of originally idealist conceptions. . . . That is the road from national feeling to race delusion, from cosmopolitanism to the dream of world

EDITED BY PETER QUENNELL AND ALAN HODGE

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LINES REVIEW

EDITED BY ALAN RIDDELL

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NUMBER SIX

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Reviews

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rule, from a war of liberation to world conquest, from the national state to the organisation of *Lebensraum*, from humanism and Christianity to exclusive or tribal religion and ethics." So he concludes: "The central problem of revision is the romantic-idealist world of ideas as the ideological source of nourishment for German historical thinking."

Hofer, however, sketches an alternative answer which finds some confirmation in Hajo Holborn's concluding essay and which is more interesting to an English reader, if only because it is less familiar. "The typical characteristics of German historical thinking can be understood under this motto as well: Historical destiny treated Germany and Germans badly. . . . The dissatisfaction of German thought with German destiny extends not only to historical development, to the dimension of historical time, but also to the geographic situation and therefore to the dimension of historical space. If the first notion is illuminated by the refrain 'We came too late in history,' then the second notion can be expressed in the words 'We have an unfavourable position in the historical world.' Both thoughts justify the conviction that the extraordinary (that is, that which cannot be measured by European standards) is permitted, or even more, required, for Germany." The obvious instance of this is German *Weltpolitik* before 1914 which had exactly the characteristics of restlessness, touchiness, and envy to be expected of a late-comer out to grab what he could. Writing of that period, German historians have justified German behaviour on the grounds that national unification was achieved late and Germany had to make up for lost time if she was not to be left behind. In the same way, Germans never tire of explaining that their exposed position in Central Europe has forced them to follow a policy of expansion, whether they wanted to or not.

EITHER of these two suggestions—and they do not exclude each other—is illuminating in the study of German historical writing. Yet neither of them touches the real problem in the revision of the concepts of German history which is Dr. Hofer's aim. This becomes clearer if we go on to examine what the different contributors to the volume have to offer in the place of the traditional version.

At this stage, as Hans Kohn points out in his introductory survey, a reinterpretation of German history is not a question of new facts or documents but of a new perspective, of a different set of values by which to judge what is already known.

What does this mean in practice? One possibility, canvassed by more than one of the historians represented in this volume, is to break down the national framework of historical study and of historical teaching. J. A. von Rantzau, for instance, in his essay on "The Glorification of the State in German historical writing," insists that, until German historians are prepared to formulate historical problems in wider terms than those of the nation-state and the study of state documents, they will be unable to find a way out of the blind alley into which they have led themselves and their pupils. Rantzau makes a sharp attack on Gerhard Ritter, the most influential of those German historians who seek to rescue the conservative-nationalist version of German history from its disastrous association with Hitlerism and to reassert the "unique character" of German development. "After all," Rantzau remarks, "cannibals could justify man-eating by the simple statement that it is an expression of their 'unique character'."

In the view, not only of Rantzau, but of Friedrich Meinecke, once the classical exponent of the Berlin tradition of Ranke, Droysen, and Treitschke, German historians have more to learn from Burckhardt than from Ranke—from Burckhardt who declined the succession to Ranke at Berlin and refused to let his view of history be bounded by the state or absorbed in politics. Such a reorientation of interest, the expansion of historians' horizons, breaking away from the egocentricity of national history, would benefit not only German but every nation's historical studies. Yet it only partially answers the question, how the history of Germany itself is to be seen and taught. Granted the wider knowledge of European history, granted (and it is a great deal to take for granted) the appreciation of the Slav and the French point of view, what is a German to make of the unification of his country, and of its history since unification, from Bismarck to Hitler? Is he expected to repudiate it altogether, to renounce it as a disastrous pursuit of false aims?

Something like this seems to be implied in several of these essays. But if so drastic a

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revision of German views of their own history is to be undertaken, where is the ground on which the historian is to take his stand? For the German student and the German reader will not accept a French or a Polish point of view; they will only accept a point of view firmly founded in German history itself.

DR. HOFER'S reply is given at the end of his essay: "It is important to search out those men and those ideas which warned that the wrong path had been taken, and sought to direct the German spirit back to its true historic mission. These men and these ideas, however, were forced aside by the main stream of development. We must now take up the search for the wasted opportunities. . . . The Germans must learn again to see that alongside and within the Prussian-German historical stream, there was also a German historical stream. . . . They must once again bring up into their historical awareness the fact that there operated, beside the authoritarian, power-oriented current of forces, liberal and democratic forces which merely did not have the historical chance to survive. They will then cease to be victims of the idea that, in liberal, democratic political and historical thinking, something alien is being forced upon them."

This is clear but not convincing. For why did the liberal and democratic forces "not have the historical chance to survive"? The answer is given by another contributor, Alfred von Martin. "Was there," he asks, "'another' Germany, better and wiser, besides Bismarck's Germany? There were individual Germans who did not share his ideas and who foresaw the oncoming time of troubles, the era of destructive wars and the inevitable catastrophe. . . . The enemies of Bismarck ought to be portrayed together by someone—it would be a small German hall of fame. Yet they were never anything but solitary individuals and their voices died away, almost unheard. . . . For, behind these Germans, there was no Germany they could represent."

As Dr. Hofer himself admits: "despite any effort at revision, Bismarck's foundation of the Empire remains a fact." So is the power and prestige which Germany enjoyed under the Empire, so is the map of Europe as it was redrawn by Hitler. You cannot displace facts by ghosts. To destroy the hold which the old view

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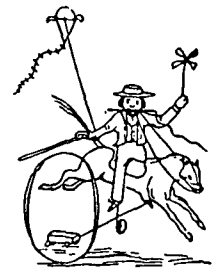

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of German history has on German minds something more impressive is needed than the invocation of wasted opportunities and forgotten voices.

It is here that the limitations of the historian's own ability to effect such a change become apparent. For the faults of German historiography only reflect the faults of Germany's historical development. The glorification of power in German historical writing is a secondary problem: the real problem is the glorification of power in German life. History is a mirror in which every nation and every generation seeks and sees its own image. To change the image in the historian's mirror you must change the reality.

Dr. Hofer admits as much at the beginning of his essay: "The standard by which the true and false values of the past must be differentiated anew can arise only out of the present." The only answer to the facts of the past is not the wasted opportunities of the past but new and different facts in the present. In the end the revision of German history will be achieved not by the criticisms of the historians, valuable though these are, but by a change of heart in the German people. The historian will reflect that change of heart, he may even contribute to it, but he cannot initiate it. If the German people have done with the worship of power, authority, and the nation, they will see the faults in their own history. If they have not, the historians represented in Dr. Kohn's volume will join the other unheeded voices of German history, and the image in the historian's glass will resume its familiar lineaments.

Alan Bullock

RUSSIAN OR MARXIST?

Is the Soviet Union, as it exists today, to be regarded primarily as the creation of Marxist doctrine, which happened to find its first opportunity for practice in Russia, or as a development from the Russian national past in which a revolutionary theory of West European origin merely provided form and direction to forces which have remained essentially Russian? A case can be made for either view, with the one which stresses Russian nationalism and historical tradition implying a more hopeful prospect for the future than the alternative, which would admit the Russian people, or at least their rulers, to be thoroughly conditioned by an international revolutionary faith. It is highly consoling, especially for politicians and diplomats of the more conventional sort, to be able to assure oneself that world-revolution is a thing of the past and that the problem of the "cold war" is really much less intractable than might be supposed. The Communists, for their part, are involved by the controversy in a somewhat uncomfortable dilemma; they cannot afford to admit that the Soviet Union of Stalin and Malenkov has departed in any way from the pure Marxist-Leninist faith; yet the popular belief that the Soviet régime is run by "realists" concerned only with Russian national interests is so advantageous to Soviet policy in its effect on Western opinion, that Communist propaganda finds it tactically convenient to encourage the spread of this belief indirectly, by presenting world issues in terms of relations between aggressive and peace-loving national states, rather than in the older language of international proletarian revolution.

Three books which have recently been published* are particularly relevant to the problem of estimating the relative importance of the contributions of Marxism and Russian tradition respectively to the shaping of the

---

* *German Marxism and Russian Communism.* By JOHN PLAMENATZ. Longmans, Green and Co. 25s.

Pan-Slavism: Its History and Ideology. By HANS KOHN. University of Notre-Dame Press. $6.25.

How Russia is Ruled. By MERLE FAINSOD. Harvard University Press. $7.50. Oxford University Press. 60s.

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contemporary Soviet world. The first, the work of an Oxford historian of political theory, a Fellow of Nuffield College who was born in Montenegro, deals with the evolution of Marxist doctrine in Western Europe and the modifications it has undergone at Russian hands both before and since the Revolution. The second, by a Czech who is now Professor of History at City College, New York, traces the idea of a Russian messianic mission as elaborated by a group of Russian writers during the 19th century. The third book, the author of which is Professor of Government at Harvard and director of political studies at the Harvard Russian Research Center, provides what is perhaps the most illuminating study so far made of contemporary Soviet institutions in relation to the original Bolshevik intentions and purposes.

MR. PLAMENATZ sets out to "expound and criticise" the theories of Marx—whom he regards as a "remarkably confused but also truly great and original thinker"—and to explain how the Russian Communist doctrines arose out of them. He does not consider the latter to be intellectually at all comparable to the former: "passing from German to Russian Marxism," he says, "we leave the horses and come to the mules." He recognises, however, the fact that the Russian Marxists made a revolution, whereas the German Marxists never did, and finds a significant difference between the outlook of Lenin as a man who willed and achieved the capture of power, and the relatively detached attitude of Marx, who in spite of his principles was always a spectator rather than a practitioner of revolution. The Bolshevik modifications of Marxism, according to Mr. Plamenatz, "were made to justify policies adopted to take advantage of Russian conditions," and these conditions included the emotional background of Russian national traditions as well as the actual social and political situation in the country.

The paradox of the Bolshevik Revolution lay in the fact that Russia was by orthodox Marxist theory unripe for proletarian socialist revolution and yet, by reason of agrarian discontent, the political inexperience of the bourgeoisie, and the strains of the First World War, afforded an opportunity for the seizure and exercise of power by a small revolutionary

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minority such as existed nowhere else in Europe. Lenin's conception of the Bolshevik party as a disciplined conspiratorial group with a nucleus of "professional" revolutionaries was formed partly in response to conditions of police repression under the Tsardom—conditions which had long ceased to prevail in Western Europe—and partly under the influence of the older Russian revolutionary tradition of the Narodniks. When this group —estimated to comprise not more than 23,600 members at the beginning of 1917—came into possession of governmental power in a country wherein its supposed class basis, the industrial proletariat, formed but a small minority of the population, it soon began to assume the role, not merely of a class, but of a party dictatorship.

Mr. Plamenatz points out that there is nothing in Marx which can be used to justify single-party totalitarian rule as it has developed in Russia. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" meant indeed for Marx that repressive measures would be used against the defeated bourgeoisie after the revolution, but his theory required that, by the time capitalist society was ripe for revolution, the proletariat would have become the overwhelming majority of the population and would freely elect their own leaders and administrative officials. Lenin never openly repudiated this Marxist conception; even while he was establishing the monopoly of political power for his party, he claimed that it was responsible to the people, yet he was never able to explain how a government could be held to account when there was no legal alternative to it.

But party dictatorship based on a dogmatic ideology certainly fitted in well with the political habits of a people whose tradition was one of the autocracy of a "Holy Orthodox Tsar" and of the passive obedience of his subjects to the orders of his officials. The history of the Soviet state, therefore, as Professor Fainsod's study shows, has been one of reversion in essentials to the spirit and methods of the Tsarist system minus the liberal and humanitarian element introduced into it during the last half-century of its existence. But this does not mean that the new régime can simply transform itself into the kind of static respectable, conservative state that a Pobedonostsev would have approved. The Communists have no hereditary legitimacy or ancient sanctity to invoke; having gained power as revolutionary socialists, they can only justify and maintain their despotic authority by the continual revival of the hopes and fears their doctrine involves, even though some of them might prefer to call it a day and lead a quiet life in the future on the proceeds of past success. If the dictatorship of the party was formerly considered essential for realising Marxist ends, the cultivation of Marxist faith is today no less essential for sustaining the vested interests of the dictatorship. For, unless there is a great revolutionary cause to sustain, with victory and defeat continually hanging in the balance, what excuse can there be for the despotism and terror, the privileges of the bureaucracy, the vast parasitic apparatus of the secret police, the ruthless driving and regimentation of the masses?

THERE cannot be "proletarian vigilance" unless there are landlords and capitalists against whom to fight, and such have theoretically not existed inside Russia for a quarter of a century. So the struggle can only be against the external enemy, against capitalist encirclement and the imperialist warmongers; all elements of disaffection within the Soviet state must now be represented as instruments of a foreign foe. In the field of foreign policy, as in the internal organisation of the state, Marxism has been combined with Russian tradition, with the difference that in the attitude to the outer world the tradition has been not so much that of Tsardom itself as of the Petersburg bureaucracy, conceiving of Russia as part of a system of European states always disliked and distrusted. "Tsarist imperialism" was the grandiose dream of the Russian Pan-Slavs, who, as Professor Kohn shows in his book, took over and modified, with a specially Russian twist, a conception originating among the Slavs of Austria. The Russian Pan-Slavs combined a belief in the inherent cultural superiority of Russia (identified with the spiritual traditions of Orthodox Christianity) over the "defiled humanity" of Western Europe with a programme for a political Slav Federation involving the disruption of the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires. The Slav Federation under Russian leadership, as projected by Danilevsky, was territorially almost identical with the Soviet bloc as realised by

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Stalin in 1945, except that the Soviet Union failed to get control of Greece or the Turkish Straits which were included in the earlier blueprint. The Slav Federation would necessarily have dominated Europe by its sheer bulk, as would also the Soviet bloc after the Second World War but for a factor unforeseen by Danilevsky, the counteracting power of the United States of America. The Pan-Slav programme was indeed in effect one of unlimited objectives, as was boldly asserted in the writings of those who, like Dostoevsky, claimed that Russia's destiny was to create "a whole new world . . . and introduce a new idea to mankind." The humiliation of 1878 was a bitter disappointment to the zealots of Pan-Slavism; they only, however, postponed their fated hour, and shortly before his death Dostoevsky wrote: "The future genuine Russian idea has not yet appeared among us, but the earth is portentously pregnant with it and is making ready to deliver it amid agonising pain."

In these words, at any rate, Dostoevsky was certainly prophetic.

G. F. Hudson

WHAT IS BLOOMSBURY ?

So many silly things have been written about "Bloomsbury" that it is a relief to come upon an eminently sensible book with the ominous title *The Bloomsbury Group.** But it is not really about the Bloomsbury group. Part I, consisting of three chapters and 95 pages, may at a pinch be taken as relevant to the title, for it is labelled "The Background" and deals with "Bloomsbury" and Bloomsbury philosophy and æsthetics. But after Part I Mr. Johnstone, to all intents and purposes, forgets the group and in 275 pages gives us appreciative and, on the whole, intelligent exposition and criticism of the novels of E. M. Forster and Virginia Woolf and the biographical and historical works of Lytton Strachey.

The word group is ambiguous and, as used in the title of this book, misleading. It suggests, intentionally suggests, that the individuals included in the circle were consciously pursuing a common purpose—æsthetic or philosophic or social—like the encyclopædists, the authors of *Lyrical Ballads*, the Clapham Sect, the Pre-Raphaelites, or the Post-Impressionists. Mr. Johnstone, in his Part I, tries unsuccessfully to force the group of Bloomsbury friends into this kind of Procrustean bed by representing them as dominated by the philosophy of G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* and the æsthetics of Roger Fry. The idea is a delusion. The Bloomsbury group was a circle of friends each of whom was an extreme individualist, doing his or her work in his or her own way, unconscious of a common purpose, theory, or philosophy. With their roots in Cambridge, they had been, of course, greatly influenced by the personality and writings of Professor Moore and eternally interested and amused by the proliferation of Roger Fry's lively intellect and imagination. They would not have become, and remained for forty, fifty, or more years, such intimate friends unless they had shared many tastes, beliefs, prejudices, and delusions. But that is a very different thing from being a group in the sense used in the first part of this book.

The point is of real importance as is shown by the second and third parts of Mr. Johnstone's book. Where he treats E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, and Lytton Strachey as individual writers, analyses their works, criticises their methods, and assesses their merits and defects, his book is a contribution to the

* *The Bloomsbury Group. A study of E. M. Forster, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, and their Circle.* By J. K. Johnstone. Secker and Warburg. 25s.

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literary criticism of an era. But every now and then he remembers his title and thinks that he must prove some profound æsthetic or philosophical likeness. Not unnaturally, being an honest man, he can only point to the most general or superficial similarities between these three authors—similarities so general or superficial that they have no significance. For instance, in order to force *Queen Victoria* and *Mrs. Dalloway* into the same bed, Mr. Johnstone is reduced to the straits of the following sentence:

> Around the central figure of Clarissa Dalloway, the other characters in the novel are grouped, according to the extent and method of their presentment, in somewhat the same way as the characters in Strachey's *Queen Victoria* are grouped about the Queen.

Note "in somewhat the same way"! And note the heroic effort in the following sentence to put *Eminent Victorians* to bed with *Where Angels Fear to Tread* under the æsthetic eye of Roger Fry:

> The essential of great tragedy, Fry has said, is "the vivid sense of the inevitability" of its unfolding. In this respect "Gordon" recalls Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, though the sense of inevitability is much more vivid in Strachey's biography than in Forster's novel.

Having united the two novelists with the biographer in this kind of way, he united the two novelists with each other thus:

> As Virginia Woolf expands a day into nearly a lifetime in *Mrs. Dalloway*, so she contracts ten years into the pattern of a day in *To the Lighthouse*—in somewhat the same way as Forster gives *A Passage to India* the shape of an Indian year.

Again on page 156, in a passage which is too long to quote, he sums up the "first principles" and the "ultimate values" which, according to him, the three writers share. Here the similarities are so general as to have little or no importance, e.g. "all three respect both reason and sensibility." This might give Shakespeare, Jane Austen, and Henry James a claim to membership of the Bloomsbury Group.

Leonard Woolf

About our Authors

LIONEL TRILLING's essay on Jane Austen will be included in the fifth volume of *The Pelican Guide to English Literature*. This series has just been inaugurated, and the fifth volume ("Blake to Byron") will appear early next year. . . . RICHARD WRIGHT's report on the Gold Coast consists of excerpts from a book, *Black Power*, which he has just completed. . . . CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS is Member of Parliament for Devizes, and is the author of many books on political and social theory. . . . DAVID RIESMAN, Professor of Sociology at the College of the University of Chicago, is the author of *The Lonely Crowd*, by now a classic analysis of American manners and morals. . . . MAX BELOFF is Reader in Comparative Study of Institutions at Nuffield College, Oxford. . . . DAVID SYLVESTER, a contributor to *The Times*, the *Listener* and *The Burlington Magazine*, is just completing a book on modern sculpture. . . . ELIZABETH JENNINGS's book of *Poems* won the Arts Council prize. . . . CHRISTOPHER SYKES's new novel *Dates and Parties* will be brought out by Verschoyle in October. . . . ALAN BULLOCK is the Censor of St. Catherine's Society, Oxford. . . . JAMES JOLL is a Fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford. . . . G. F. HUDSON is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

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